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ABSTRACT

Ten papers assess 3 years of the La Mancha Project whose basic objectives are to devise methods and materials to help students write more effectively, to coordinate the students' writing experiences in English with their other academic classes and life outside school, to provide an in-service training program for secondary school teachers on the teaching of writing, and to change the focus of classroom instruction from recall and memorization to imagination and creativity. Included are (1) "Only Learners Have Any Right to be Teachers;" (2) "After Three Years;" (3) "The Tenth Grade Experiment;" (4) "The Ninth Grade and Media;" (5) "The Scoring of Papers--La Mancha Sophomores;" (6) "History and La Mancha;" (7) "Language and the La Mancha Teacher: Initial Survey"--with four tables of findings; (8) "A Different Drummer: Writing in a Nongraded Elective English Program"--plus a list of course offerings; (9) "La Mancha and the Humanities;" and (10) "More Windmills"--a commentary by Frank Manchel, the director of the Project. Lists of directors and the 12 participating Vermont schools are provided. (See also TE 002 133.) (JMC)

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La Mancha-Plus Two-1970

FRANK MANCHEL AND
VIRGINIA CLARK, *Editors*

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INTRODUCTION

by

DEAN ALFRED B. ROLLINS, JR.

Any fresh attack upon an educational problem is an exciting thing. New and vigorous approaches are rare in our bland era. We have so accustomed ourselves to the mask of conformity and caution that we have all but forgotten what it is to give our deep enthusiasm to a cause.

The La Mancha project, upon which the University of Vermont's English Department and twelve Vermont high schools have embarked is a particularly exciting one, because it hits an old problem in new ways without oversimplifying it. The problem itself is engaging. The improvement of skills in composition has so long been a preoccupation of the schools that failure has come to seem normal. But the project is especially interesting because it brings forward again some central truths which have, in recent years, been lost in the machinery. Children will be allowed, even asked, to write about things which interest them. They will be expected to perform at different levels, to act as individuals do. Their teachers will attempt to work in an open environment, inviting observation, desiring criticism. Writing will be significantly treated in all the disciplines of a student's program. The whole group will be involved at intervals with teachers from other schools in the State who will help appraise what is being done and who will be able to carry ideas back to their own classrooms. In addition, contact with Great Britain through research and personal visits seems a promising new dimension for future years.

If this cooperative approach works, there will certainly be controversy—regarding both the methods and the topics about which students write. As an administrator and a teacher, I welcome this controversy. It is dispute from which we hone our truths. The edge of truth can only be dulled by caution. Teachers know it is their task not to indoctrinate students with their own views—whether these be traditional or new—but to help young people learn how to use their minds and their skills. We hope to teach people not what to think, but how to think. People learn to write well when they want to communicate observations which interest them and ideas in which they believe.

This is an engaging, unpredictable, and lively business. It is the kind of excitement which can attract the interest of students and can properly command our deep commitment.

WELCOMING REMARKS

by

LEONIDAS M. JONES

Chairman, Department of English
University of Vermont

As chairman of the English Department, it is a pleasure to welcome you specifically on behalf of the department. We have a selfish motive. In addition to its many other rich benefits, the La Mancha Program has done more than anything in my twenty years of teaching here to bring college and high school English teachers together to enable us to cooperate in achieving our closely related purposes. As you know, Professors Long, Cochran, and Clark have been most active, but we have all profited, either directly or indirectly. I enjoyed speaking to a high school class, and so did Professor Bogorad and many others. We are grateful to Professor Manchel, and we are very much indebted to you all. Welcome.

PREFACE

by

FRANK MANCHEL

University of Vermont

During the past three years, the University of Vermont, aided by a grant from the Simmonds Foundation and in cooperation with more than a dozen secondary schools, has vigorously advanced new approaches to the teaching of writing in our public schools. A model curriculum center at Champlain Valley Union High School has been developing new curricula for college-bound and general students; twelve other secondary schools in the State of Vermont plus over forty public schools in the United States are using, testing, and reacting to these new materials; and the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Vermont has given considerable time, expert help and special equipment to the public schools in a serious and concerted effort, not only to improve the teaching of writing in the state but also to raise the quality of teacher preparation on the college level.

The basic objectives of The La Mancha Project are (1) to devise methods and materials which will help students to write more effectively than they have in the past; (2) to coordinate the student's writing experience in English both with his other academic classes and his daily life outside of school; (3) to provide an in-service training program for secondary school teachers who want to know more about the teaching of writing; and (4) to change the focus of classroom instruction from recall and memorization to imagination and creativity. To achieve these ends, we have been experimenting with such techniques as a workshop approach for teachers and students to coordinate assignments, a heavy emphasis on the use of mass media, student and teacher publications, three state-wide conferences, a series of public lectures by visiting educators from different parts of the U.S.A., and bi-monthly seminars with teachers and professors at the University of Vermont.

Thus far, we have had considerable success in motivating students to write more frequently and more effectively, in promoting more positive attitudes toward the teaching of writing, and in advancing the theory that mass media have a very important role to play in any curricula concerned with writing. It is still too early to assess what particular materials or methods work best for each grade or ability level. Indeed, one conclusion of our work may be that the sequential or packaged approach is the least effective method for teaching about writing.

In short, La Mancha is an ongoing concern with matters of perennial and long-range values, not with the predispositions of the past. Our function as educators is not to excuse the inadequacies of the current setting but to help teachers engage their students in experiences designed to improve communication among educated and responsible individuals.

ONLY LEARNERS HAVE ANY RIGHT TO BE TEACHERS

by

GEORGE ROBB

Consulting Psychologist

Essex School System, England

I want to call this talk "Only Learners Have Any Right to Be Teachers." All of us here today are concerned to promote the welfare of the children for whom we are responsible. We aim at preparing them for life to allow them the opportunity for self-fulfillment and to foster in them a healthy and a justified self-respect. It is doubtful if this end can be generally attained if we persist in giving undue importance to certain administratively convenient labels such as E. S. M. and I. Q. The definition of educational subnormality does not mention I. Q. or intelligence. These are pupils who, by reason of limited ability or other conditions resulting in educational retardation, require some specialized form of education fully or partly in substitution for an education normally given in our schools. The point to note is that this is an academic judgment and not an intellectual one; a description and not an explanation. And yet it is common to find the term E. S. M. equated with dullness and, much worse, with the implication that the level of intelligence concerned will not rise. It may well be, as Bernard Shaw or Oscar Wilde said, that we are two nations separated by a common language, and yet I hope that today we will find sufficient of common ground to come together.

We are here because we love children. We are here to examine why it is necessary to teach children rather than subjects. Can any of us here really imagine what it must be like to be at the mercy of an enthusiast? I don't suppose that there ever has been a time in education so characterized by flux and change. We find people who are enthusiastic about primary mathematics. We find enthusiasts for the Initial Teaching Alphabet. We find people who attain success using the Stern apparatus or a multitude of other teaching aids, methods, and programs. I would like to put before you the need to preserve alive in us, the need, the capacity for self-criticism. Of course, a teacher wants to succeed. Those of us who know some success with a particular method, approach, or book, or tool are quite likely to become respectably enthusiastic about it. But even in those of us —perhaps especially in those of us—who find enthusiasm within us for a particular approach, there is a real and a live and a continuing need to be self-critical, to make sure that by now we haven't got away from the goals in too much, too close involvement with the means.

A cartoon I saw recently and which was shown during the lecture showed a kindergarten registration. "My name is 'Don't Eddie'." I hope his mother was blushing. She certainly has need to. And this, I think, has a message for teachers also: that we must, however irritating the child, we must pay attention to the positive aspects of what the child is and can do, and not wholly concentrate on the negative aspects of his behavior. Of course there's a risk that, when a child is irritating—and we know that they can be so—there's a risk that we will start to concentrate exclusively on the negative aspects. I remember once in Hampshire, and I do mean Hampshire, I was asked to see a child. Two and one half pages of foolscap had been used to describe her crimes. "Bit P. Smith. Sent out. Poured ink over Y. Punished." And so on. And I found this child seated outside the headmistress's room. She was all of five years, six months old. On my arrival the staff declared a long play time, a long midmorning break and sat around me in a coven expecting me to say things to confirm their judgment that the child was a most obnoxious creature. I really did get angry with this staff and pointed out that they had been paying attention exclusively to the negative aspects of this child's behavior, and that given a study of her background, no surprise should have been occasioned by some of her behavior. Indeed this was exacerbated by *their* behavior, *their* concentration.

So surely here is a message for us, those of us who are concerned with children and with teaching: that we must start from where the child is. We must emphasize what the child can do. Let's pay attention; let's emphasize the positive aspects of the children's behavior.

If we look at the problems experienced by slow learners in school, let's look at a definition—children of any degree of ability who are unable to do what is commonly done by children of their age—the likelihood is that the slow learner finds that 8 children out of 10 or 36 out of 45 consistently get more sums right than he, do better at reading, receive praise more often. It's probably also true that they are heavier, taller, less subject to colds, healthier, more advanced in physical development than he, and there is evidence to show that these latter may be causally related to backwardness. The likelihood is also that Johnny will have been less interested in books or toys than the majority of his early classmates, that he is clumsier at handling things or himself, and that from the point when reading started to be a required activity, he has started to feel less and less with it, more and more frequently been shown how badly he is doing compared to his classmates. He probably comes from a large family, too (that's five or more) and in my country was quite likely to be born between May and August. And he has much more chance than the average child of having unfavorable home conditions. It should not surprise us, therefore, to find him liable to outbursts of temper or to behavior generally at an emotional level appropriate to a much younger child. His immediate memory is not good, but his long-term memory for events which are important to him is no worse than that of the average child.

I wonder how you and I would fare under such a load of handicaps. How lucky *we* are to be born into a culture which values those abilities we have or are born with a chance of developing. And what do we do about it? Let's look at some causes of difficulty which may be handicapping children in their development in school. I want to talk about children with some learning difficulty, and then I'll talk about some children who are disadvantaged by school because they possess extraordinarily high intelligence; and I hope thereafter to synthesize the two cases to show their common features, to show in fact that special education had better be re-titled, with justification, "good education."

Now an examination of our range of resources soon makes it apparent that a great deal of effort is taken to meet the needs of the child who is partially sighted or who has a hearing loss or who is physically handicapped or whose levels and type of either intellectual or emotional function make his or her need for special educational treatment quite manifest. We have day schools and residential schools to cater for the range of need.

But what about the child who is mildly handicapped? The child who has a relatively mild or an intermittent hearing loss, with a slight defect in vision? Who is frequently but not consistently absent because of low resistance to colds or infection? We know, for example, that the bright child is heavier, bigger, healthier than the dull child and while, as we have seen, gross handicaps attract attention in health, relatively minor handicaps may well be present in children we view as normal—apart from being academically dull or backward. A child with a slight, undiagnosed hearing loss may hear 80% of what is said in class, but even that involves the loss of the equivalent of one day per week. The short-sighted child may find it a lot less damaging to his or her self-respect to say "I can't *do* the sum on the board" than to say "I can't *see* the sum on the board," particularly in the case of girls—they will thereafter have to wear glasses. Far more than the loss of specific lessons is involved or even the increasing difficulty and eventual impossibility of catching up. Far more than that, it's the corrosive effect on the child's self-respect that bothers me and the frustrations experienced by the teacher.

But how can, you may feel, how *can* such conditions exist and not be noticed? Well, quite easily. Ominously easily. Catarrhal conditions may induce intermittent deafness which may not be present at any medical examination the child may have during the early years at school. Absences coinciding with the date of the medical examination may postpone spectacles being given to a child for quite a long time after he needed them. And there are, of course, defects of these various sensory conditions that don't make themselves obvious. We know about a child who is so deaf as to require a hearing aid. But do we know about the child who can hear perfectly clearly all the sounds up to a thousand cycles per second but not hear the sounds above that? Do teachers know about that? Because the effect is that the youngster can hear all the vowels correctly but almost none of the consonants. And so their spelling, and their reading, therefore is affected and their speech—they won't hear the high sibilant sounds *s, t, d,* so you find *-ed* endings being missed often,*-s* endings being missed often. Now as I say, if the handicap is sufficiently severe, it will have been noticed, but if it is not sufficiently severe for that to happen, it may well be still sufficiently severe to present the child concerned with a real and continuing source of difficulty, academically speaking.

Vision? Well, we know about the child who is long-sighted, and the child who is short-sighted, but do we know that there are other conditions which result, for example, just to take one, in the child's seeing quite clearly, except that he might be looking down through two cardboard tubes such as those in which maps are delivered; and within that limited periphery, the child can see absolutely clearly. Now if the child does not happen to notice that the teacher is writing something on the periphery of the board, the edge of the board, then he is going to lose those points. Unless he happens to strobe the classroom, the blackboard, he will miss some point. And cumulatively, this loss can be very important.

What about epilepsy? Epilepsy is a condition that we all, in the absence of information and experience, tend to shudder from. Let's think of this again as another continuum, as indeed vision and hearing are. At one end of the continuum there is the normal person, you and I *now*. At the other end of the continuum, the condition at its most extreme results in simultaneous firing of all the brain cells, a condition known as *grand mal*. Here the child or individual becomes unconscious, twitching, blue lips, frothing, violent convulsions. This condition very rarely appears for the first time in the classroom because normally it is evident before the child comes to school and is controlled by drugs. So let's leave out the extreme of the condition; I'll call this for argument's sake a continuum on a five-point scale, *grand mal* being 5. Number 4, *petit mal*. Now this is present in many more children than teachers may suspect. This results in very brief but very frequent losses of consciousness. The child may not know that he is unconscious. They don't fall down, their eyes don't necessarily glaze, they may be unconscious for as brief a period as one-eighth of a second. But if it happens very frequently, it may built up to a significant impediment to the child's progress. What do you do about it? Well, the biggest difficulty is that the teachers can become extremely annoyed because it is very often just these children who are interested in their work and who convey this to the teacher that have *petit mal*, and how irritating it is for us as adults to find another adult asking a question and then apparently not listening to the answer. In an adult to whom we accord equal status, we'd write this off as sheer bad manners. In a pupil, for whom we have continual responsibility, and who is to a large extent in our power, we'd feel a lot more strongly about it. So that, if the teacher finds that a child finds it almost impossible to concentrate consistently, asks questions and doesn't listen to the answers, I for one would hope that they would call in an educational psychologist. When I have such children referred to me, I might get the child to count backwards from 100 or to take 4 from 100 or to build up certain patterns of tapping on the desk—anything in any rhythmic pattern that will get the child to build up his own, her own rhythmic pattern. And if the child then disrupts that pattern, without apparently being able to control it—99, 98, 97, 96, [pause] 95—and disrupts patterns of tapping—these in themselves do not prove a thing, but they may be straws in a wind, and I for one, having found some such straws—several such straws—would call in relevant medical *expert* advice.

Number 3 in our continuum would be epileptic equivalence. In this condition the child does not fall down and twitch, he doesn't go briefly unconscious, but it results in violent, if brief, changes of behavior. In other words, a perfectly charming bland child will behave as a vicious brute and a bully, and this may occur during a period of half a day or a day and a half or some such period. If teachers notice that this is occurring, and if they then notice some periodicity about it—say, every five or six weeks—then again I would call in the relevant specialist's advice. It is not infrequently the case that teachers who have been teaching for twenty years or more still think of or describe some children as being "controlled by the moon," and I can't help thinking that there is some relevant connection here. Be under no illusions about it, there are more children in our schools today with undiagnosed epilepsy than you would believe. Perhaps that should read "than you would expect."

In a recent survey of two schools for educating subnormal children, only 60 percent of the children were found to have normal hearing. In other words, 4 children out of 10 in these two schools were found, at the age of 15, to have had an undiagnosed hearing loss throughout the school life. Can we view these gaps in our professional armory with complacency?

The work of Professor Bernstein is an important source for our consideration. He distinguishes between the use of language made in homes at the lower and upper ends of the socioeconomic scale. In working-class houses there tends to be a much more restricted use of language made than in those at the other end of this scale. On the one hand conversation is rarely indulged in for its own sake. Commands are issued, debate not encouraged. "Do this because I say so." You and I, ladies and gentlemen, know half a dozen words to mean "green," each of which is slightly different from the others. We can think of a range of words to express fine shades of meaning, each of which has a general similarity of meaning, having its own particular characteristics. If one thinks of the width of a blackboard, any blackboard, as representing the number of words that you and I know, you can take it that about 75 percent of the width of that blackboard represents the number of words that you and I *use,* because we all know words we never use except when we are doing crosswords. On that same blackboard scale you can take it that about 60 percent of the width of the blackboard represents the number of words known and used by people at the bottom end of the socio-economic scale. And 60 percent, in my view, is a generous maximum.

I have done sufficient research myself on this matter not to be in any doubt that Bernstein is right and not to be in any doubt that this limited use of language in which conversation is rarely engaged in for its own sake has a severely inhibiting effect on the intellectual development of their children. In this context it is important to notice Sir Cyril Burt's point that there are more potential geniuses born at the bottom end of the socio-economic scale than there are at the top. Everybody in this room, everybody anywhere, is born dead-stupid. I mean that we are not born with intelligence; we are born with a series of potentialities for becoming intelligent. And what you and I are now is a function of the environment provided by our parents and by life. What you and I are now is a composite of the potentialities that have been realized. And in our society, this is to say western European society, North American society, that aspect of intelligence that is most necessary for success in our academic culture is verbal intelligence.

The work of Bloom is relevant here. He points out that of adult intelligence, almost certainly about 20 percent of it was already realized by the age 1; 50 percent by age 4; 82 percent by age 8; 90 percent by age 13. These are depressing proportions even if they may now be slightly inaccurate because in the interim we have learned other means of developing verbal intelligence. But they are depressing proportions. It means quite clearly that one gets a greater return—a much greater return—in terms of child welfare and of fulfillment of potentialities if you invest X pounds (or dollars) before the age of five than at any other later point in a child's life within the educational system.

I want now to consider some of the problems posed and experienced by children of very high intellectual ability. Consider for a moment the child who said to me at the age of five years four months when I went by appointment to see her at her house, "Ah, good morning, I expect you've come to assess my ability. I warn you that I won't be very intelligent today, I'm suffering from the after-effects of measles." Would that child be adequately stimulated by the normal infant school curriculum? Or the child who said to her mother, "Have you any conception what it's like to stop thinking between 9:30 and 3:30, because that's what happens to me in my play group." Or the child who at the age of about 9 years 10 months solved the following problem thus: The problem: "I planted a tree that was 8 inches tall, at the end of the next year it was 12 inches tall, at the end of the next year it was 18 inches tall, at the end of the next year it was 27 inches tall. How tall will it be at the end of the next year?" There are two correct answers to this problem given in the book. This child, although five minutes was allowed for solution of this problem, offered one of the right answers in seven seconds and the other right answer in a further five seconds and then staggered me by saying: "Have you considered the third solution?" He pointed out that 8 is 2 x 2 x 2; that 12 is 2 x 2 x 3; that 18 is 3 x 3 x 2; that 27 is 3 x 3 x 3, so the next one must be—.

These are extraordinary children, very far from the average child, but if we are to meet our responsibilities—that is to say, to provide that education suited to the age, ability and attitude of the individual child—I cannot see that we can avoid the responsibility of recognizing their differentness and of providing them with adequate and appropriate stimulation. Appropriateness is the key. It would not, in my view, be ethical or just to bias the curriculum of the infant school or the elementary school or the secondary school in favor of such children merely because they are an important invisible and at the moment grossly neglected asset to society. But we have to give them a fair shake. We have to meet their needs. We have to give them, not a greater share of the cake, but an equal share of the cake; and here I would stress that equality should not be confused, in curricular opportunity terms, with identity of opportunity.

What can we do? Well, remember that we have to cultivate enthusiasm and keep alive the capacity for self-criticism. Last May, I was asked to help an infant school with a seven year old who was composing his own nocturne, polonaise, and mazurka and playing them with considerable merit. His performance on the Weschler intelligence scale for children—well, it was off the end of that scale. I. Q. 155 with a lot to come. What to do? I gathered the infant staff around the table and got them to state, list, the subjects they had studied at college and had been trained to teach. Then the subjects they had not studied at college or university and knew anyway. And in addition, once they thought they had finished, I pointed out I wanted to know all that they knew—that some of them knew now some things about Bartok, about Mozart, about the Beatles, about grasshoppers, about frogs, about fishing, about anything. That which they knew, by virtue of their enthusiasms, of their hobbies, is also relevant and a very useful additional component to the total score of knowledge and information, of that school. Now this total sum—this total core of wisdom and experience and information—was thus made available to the class teacher who thereafter contrived individual projects on the basis of this total amount of information available to her. So that the youngster concerned, for example, made an individual, intensive, fairly long-term study of a global tour. You see, there's not much point in getting a bright youngster to read history or geography unless you've got an adult around who knows about history and geography and can therefore challenge his or her reading about it.

In general terms, I believe that education is what you retain when you have forgotten all you have learned. And the mark of an educated person is not so much what one knows at any time but how well one can find out anything that he needs to know. This I think to be true and crucially relevant. If it is true, if you find that this phrase commands your agreement, does it not make us aware of a need to re-think that which we do for and to children? It seems to me that those of our schools on both sides of the Atlantic that say or believe that they prepare children for going to university, do they not have the responsibility to teach these youngsters effective and rapid methods of study?

I believe that we ought to teach these youngsters the skill of reference that you and I now possess, having found it out the hard way; I believe that we ought to teach this at a very much younger stage. I can't see any reason why we shouldn't do much more of that at the elementary level.

What can we do for these youngsters? Well, of course, we give them a polaroid camera, we give them a genuinely portable tape recorder, send them out of school on information-gathering expeditions. We make use of our colleagues in the senior schools—specialists in math, geography, music, and history, bring them into the school to represent them and make the child known to them as sources of information. And of course we don't stop there. We introduce the child to the local curator of the museum, of the art gallery. The child goes to these places; these people come into the school. We have a responsibility as educators to make use of the total resources latent in any environment available for the education of the child.

Let's switch back for a moment to the disadvantaged child, to the child who is disadvantaged by virtue of the limiting use made by his parents of language. Professor Lisbett's work in Aberdeen showed quite conclusively that the environment of the large family constitutes a handicap to general verbal development, and that this verbal retardation also affects general mental development. That is true, unless of course the parents, as presumably the Darwin and the Huxley parents, and the Mozarts and Bachs, I suppose, unless the parents actively intervene, positively discriminate, inject, an element of liveliness of activity, of involvement, and above all of conversation, music, into the early years of the children's life. Remember the proportions: 20 percent by age 1; 50 percent by age 4.

Now what can you as teachers do about these things? Well, for a start you can *talk* to your children. Talk and talk and talk. Not just to, of course, but with, and encourage children to talk with each other. Conversation. Conversation. Conversation. But in order to converse one has to have words. And that is why I suggest most seriously to teachers of young children that they can read to the children once each day, and don't neglect to use records of music. If you are using classical music or the Beatles or whatever, make it short gaps—short bursts—ten minutes is about enough of classical music at a time because youngsters who are not used to hearing it at home will have a relatively short span of apprehension, or period for which they can attend. Can I add this? Use records of orators, like Laurence Olivier, Gielgud, Richard Burton. Some of the local papers—newspapers in Essex—recently had a go at me because I urged infant school teachers to play Richard Burton reading Dylan Thomas' "Under Milkwood" to infant school children. "To *infant* school children?" they said; "this man's mad. The children won't understand it." I believe that's true. They won't understand it, but I don't mind. How many of you, reading, and those of you who listened to me last night, have ever enjoyed listening to the Red Army Choir? I think most of us have enjoyed that. Or to hearing Verdi or Wagner in the original without understanding it? There is a value in the sheer euphony of words that is extra to their intrinsic meaning.

So, be under no illusion: by immersing these children in good, beautiful language you will give them a chance to free themselves from the handicap imposed on them by their parents' limiting use of language. There is evidence also to show that if you do this, you significantly reduce the chances of their becoming delinquent.

I'm impressed with the fact that although I go to many colleges of education—teacher training colleges—I rarely find young people who are about to leave these colleges who have an inner certainty that they can teach children to read. And this is important. Because when they leave these colleges and begin their work, I don't suppose there's anybody who's worth his salt as a teacher, who hasn't felt on the first morning on the first day of standing up in front of *your* class—you have the responsibility—who hasn't felt butterflies in the tummy. Well, of course, and experience helps us to get these butterflies flying in formation. But we have a job to do to help our less experienced and less informed colleagues to realize that there are gaps in their knowledge that are not their fault. Gaps like this: because the new teachers don't know that they can teach children to read, as long as they believe that they are not certain that they can teach children to read, what happens when they try to teach two groups of children or, for argument's sake, two children who make the same score on the same Intelligence Test. Two children with the same I. Q. And they try to teach these two children to read. One learns to read and the other does not. Now because of this inner insecurity the teacher either blames herself for not doing it properly, the child for not trying, the book as inappropriate, or the method as faulty. My point tonight is that this does not exhaust the possibilities. We know that children are different —sure, we give it lip service. Do we *know*? Do we *appreciate?* That the number of permanent teeth a child has in his or her head at the time he is being taught has a direct influence on the accessibility to teaching. That is so. In chapter 3 of a very useful book published by UNESCO called *Failure in School,* Wall and his collaborators of Michigan University show that if you relate the child's height to a series of tables you can express a child's height as a height-age. Similarly, weight-age. The number of permanent teeth a child has as a dental-age. An X-ray measurement of the rate of maturation of the bones as a carpal-age, and also grip-age, mental-age, reading-age, etc. These things can be centralized, can be averaged almost, to yield a measure of the central tendency of development, the rate of growth of the total child.

Olson quotes a fascinating experiment. He compared 27 boys who read early and who liked it with 27 boys who read late and disliked it. The point was that all 54 boys scored the same I. Q. on the same test at the same time. Other important differences between the early and the late readers were that the early readers cut their first teeth earlier—that should be tooth of course—they weighed more at birth, and their mothers started puberty earlier. Now there's not a great deal that you as teachers can do about those three variables; but there is something. You can *notice* it. You can notice them. Be aware of it. So that the next time you teach two youngsters of identical I. Q. and they respond differentially, don't assume that you've exhausted the possible range of reasons when you blame yourself, or the child, or the book, or the method. It may well be that in this many-stranded rope that is child development, they may be identical at a point in time, intellectually speaking, but very different in the other strands. And therefore you must expect them to perform differently. You must expect them to be differentially accessible to your teaching. Or to anybody else's.

Olson points out in this book—it's a startling quotation—from the point of view of child development, therefore, it is doubtful whether there exist any genuine school failures. I think the point that these three men make is that very often, as Bruner suggests, when a child gives the wrong answer, it is the right answer to the wrong question. When a child get things wrong it's because inappropriate demands are being made of him or her.

There are very many different kinds of intellectual ability, and we would do well to heed Halsey when she says, "Intelligence develops via the manipulation of objects, language, and experience." Frankly, what I think we need to do is to provide a permissive environment with a sympathetic adult who enjoys fun and who is not afraid of it in the classroom.

Have you realized, I wonder, that you can make children lighter and shorter by being unkind to them? Wittison's work in 1951 studied orphanage children in two orphanages in Germany. The design of the experiment was to feed them the same for six months and then during the second six months orphanage A would be given 20 percent more calories and the effects on the growth and height and weight would be examined. The result was just the reverse of what might have been expected. Though the A children actually gained more weight than the B children during the first unsupplemented six months, they gained less during the second six months despite actually taking in a measured 20 percent more calories. The reason appeared to be that at precisely the six-month mark a certain sister had been transferred from B to become head of A. She ruled the children of A with a rod of iron and frequently chose mealtimes to administer to individual children public and often unjustified abuse which upset all present. An exception was a group of eight favorites whom she brought with her from orphanage B. These eight always gained more weight than the others, and on being supplemented in A gained still faster. The effect on height was less than that on weight but of the same nature. Better, quotes Wittison, "a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." Let us remember that a child's work is not good or bad, it is right for *him*. If the relationship between the teacher and him is good, and right. Also that nobody expects an adult to be good at everything. Why should we expect our children to be so? It's more important that they become good people. It takes courage and imagination to grasp the opportunities for educating the child that are latent in any environment. But we must try, ladies and gentlemen, because school education is the only dynamic environment left available to children and because the law and medicine and the rest of society have become too rigidly demarcated in this sphere of influence by time. They cannot be flexible. The children haven't learned how to be flexible. You and I *can* be flexible; we must.

Let us also remember that Johnny and his classmates are gullible in the extreme. They will set themselves to learning anything that a teacher they like and respect asks them to. Therefore, it behooves us to make sure that we don't ask them to learn anything that isn't worth learning. Certainly, some of the stuff that I was taught as a pupil I've never used since and seems to be of little practical value. As an instance, how to find the square root of a number.

The Russians clearly see it as a gross waste of an important national asset, to fail to do something for their most gifted children. They admit children to their academic city school by virtue of their having passed a series of national examinations of increasing difficulty, in the mathematical and physical cultures. When I asked why *those*, I was told because those are the cultures that the nation most values. I am very glad that you and I don't live under such totalitarian conditions. But is demonstrably true that we would as a society enormously gain were we to divert even a small fraction of our gross national product in the interests of our most gifted children. However, not at the expense of giving them the idea that because they were intelligent they were therefore privileged, that because they were brighter than the rest of us, their wishes have overriding importance over those of other people.

But we should do something. Not the argument of expediency—that it's a gross waste of an important, invisible, national asset, not to do something—but as a matter of simple ethics, as a matter of simple justice. To fail to do something for these children is to connive at a continuation of a system under which certain of our youngsters don't have their needs met. When one looks at the range of means by which one has to make allowance for individual difference between children, that we provide different heights of chair because children are small, is it not the case that in the kindergarten we find that some children of the same chronological age are much too big for the furniture thus provided? Is it not the case that those of us who come and listen to lectures come away from the lecture, the same lecture, with very different ideas of what the speaker has said? And this, in adults; ladies and gentlemen, you and I, if we are going to meet the needs of the individual child, have got to be flexible about it.

Of course it's right that we should meet the needs of the gifted child, of course it's right that we should meet the needs of the disadvantaged child. My point is that if we get things right for these extremes of ability—if we do the right thing by the child— the children who are in the bottom 2 percent of the population—if we meet the needs of the children who are the top 2 percent of the scale of ability—by contriving to meet their needs, I do believe that we are very much more likely to provide an appropriate environment for the middle 96 percent of the school population—and *that* is what education should be about.

In the United Kingdom it has been estimated that 82 percent of all female college students—that is to say, those being trained as teachers—leave the teaching profession within a period of six months to two years because they are going to have children. And they return to the teaching profession some eight months to fifteen years later, according to the number of children. Those of them who are away from the classroom for some time—some years—will return to an area of professional practice that has changed beyond belief. Does this not suggest to us, ladies and gentlemen, that attitudes toward children are very much more important than facts? It does seem to me that we are much more likely to prepare children for long-term adjustment to society if we give them appropriate attitudes; the facts can come much more easily. And here I think we are going to have to do something about this. Programmed machines, programmed textbooks can convey information more effectively than you or I can; no machine, no book, can provide that vital socializing human warmth. It's quite true that if we adequately meet the needs of the brightest of our children, we will have reason to look forward to a time when society will experience an aristocracy of achievement arising out of a democracy of opportunity.

But in case you feel that I place undue value on development of the intellect, I would just like to close by reading you what I feel to be one of the most compelling testaments to love that has ever come my way to encounter. It comes from Delamar's book *Poems on Love* and it is written by an illiterate wife to her husband. The wife dies the next day. I'll read it to you.

> Dear Alf,
>
> I seen you last night in my dream. O my dear I cried at waking up. What a silly girl you been and got. The pain is bad this morning but I laught at the sollum cloks of the sisters and the sawbones. I can see they think I am booked but they don't know what has befalen between you and me. How could I die and leave my Dear. I spill my medicine this morning thinking of my Dear. Hopeing this finds you well no more new from yours truly Liz.

I find that very moving. And you know the one thing that sticks out like a sore thumb, "Yours truly" is the only thing she owes to education. Chesterton said, "So many delightful children, so many mediocre adults; and it's you and it's me that's in between." So let's not be afraid to say "I don't know"; let's not be too arrogant to say, "I need to be humble." Let's get it clear: people and attitudes are more important than facts. Let's not dare fight facts at the expense of people.

AFTER THREE YEARS

by

TOM DEVINE

Champlain Valley Union High School

Not until your faculty has sat down together and discussed thoroughly the direction you are taking in education should you try to make any kind of educational change. To change because another school in the state has changed or to revise because it is currently in vogue or to change because a directive has come down from a super administrative structure is one way of heading for trouble. It would be my advice to stay where you are—you will be better off.

If the directors of the La Mancha Project, a building principal, or a department chairman have to superimpose a reorganizational structure upon a hostile or unconcerned administration or department, the dream and the program will suffer. The department will be divided into those who will follow the program judiciously and will do a good job of following, and those who will say prove it to me and maybe eventually I will join. A third group will give vocal non-support to any talk of reorganization or new programs. Teachers belonging to the latter group wouldn't change even if all the educational data and statistics proved that there was a better way of organizing a system and a curriculum so that youngsters could benefit more than before.

The La Mancha project, a five-year attempt to improve the teaching of composition in the secondary schools of Vermont, is under the direction of Dr. Frank Manchel of the University of Vermont. The model school for the project is Champlain Valley Union High School in Hinesburg, Vermont. At Champlain Valley pilot-programs for the college bound and for students who will seek employment immediately after high school have been developed.

The teachers involved in the La Mancha project over the last three years have collectively, through investigation, evaluation, re-evaluation, and discussion, agreed upon a process and a program that are flexible enough to be used in any school in the state.

First, it is important to provide background on the methods and the materials used in the project. For most of these we are indebted to Mr. Donald Murray of the University of New Hampshire, whose book *A Writer Teaches Writing* has been the main source of guidance. James Moffett's *A Student Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers* has greatly influenced the La Mancha curriculum in the freshman college-bound program. Foremost in the classroom techniques is the workshop method of instruction. The classes at Champlain Valley range in size from fifteen to twenty-five students. The class is subdivided into groups of four or five students to provide for group discussion, evaluation, and criticism of student papers. The written material produced by the students in the class becomes the course content. The students quickly adjust to the workshop approach and, after a brief period of superficial remarks concerning written work, begin to examine and evaluate writing, keeping in mind that the object is to improve.

At the start students are grouped arbitrarily; but as the year progresses, the students are grouped with those who can be most helpful to them. Students also tend to seek out those members of a group who excel in areas that they wish to improve.

The group or seminar approach is also utilized for classroom work other than composition: book discussions, evaluations of literary works, group projects in communications, projects involving linguistic study, etc.

I believe it is valid to say that when a student feels a responsibility for the achievement of the group as well as for himself, that the method has proved itself to be important in developing student interest and involvement as well as an effective way of improving specific writing skills by making the student critically aware.

Specifically, the La Mancha program in the freshman year is designed to help students develop the basic skills necessary to convey information, ideas, and experience.

Using Murray's seven skills as outlined in chapter one of *A Writer Teaches Writing*, the teachers in the project begin to develop the techniques necessary in good writing. The seven basic skills are:

a) The writer discovers a subject.
b) He senses an audience.

- c) He searches for specifics.
- d) He creates a design.
- e) He writes.
- f) He develops a critical eye.
- g) He re-writes.

The most important word in the list of seven skills is the word *he*. It is important to realize that the purpose of the workshop approach and the inductive method of teaching writing is to get the students to write; a writer must write, and the only way to perfect the writing skill is through extensive practice.

English teachers seem to perpetuate many time-honored approaches to the teaching of writing. Murray refers to the approaches listed below as "myths" because most myths do contain small elements of truth.

1. Students learn to write well by reading great literature. This approach may appeal to many teachers because most are better prepared to teach literature than composition.
2. Students learn to write essays by analyzing professionally written essays.
3. Students learn to write well by reconstructing other people's sentences.
4. Students learn to write well by grammatical analysis.
5. Students learn to write better by taking into account extensive teacher criticism.

All of the above methods of teaching and improving writing have some validity, and undoubtedly a student exposed to any of the above methods will show some improvement in writing skills.

The La Mancha curriculum in the first year suggests that we teach writing for what it is: writing. Not grammar, not literature, but writing. The writing program is not a highly specialized course in creative writing for the academically talented. It is not our objective to turn out future Steinbecks or Faulkners. It *is* the objective of the program to instruct all students, to the limit of their ability, in the effective use of their language. That means teaching them three things: how to organize their thoughts around a central idea, how to test those ideas and thoughts for logic, and how to express them in clear, concise language in a unified piece of prose.

The first skill to be taught is organization. To organize is to think. Effective organization is not easy, but it is within the range of ability of most high school students. The second essential in teaching writing is to allow enough time in the curriculum to do the job. It is folly to assume that writing, one of the most complex and difficult skills, can be taught by allotting a few minutes a week to a potpourri of assorted skills and drills or by assigning a paper once a week; and yet writing and composition receive in most schools less than twenty-five percent of the total instruction in the language arts curriculum at the secondary level. The third objective of the program is to develop and follow a logical sequence in developing skills. It is not sufficient simply to provide students with time to write and time to discuss without also providing time for proper guidance. The course must have a pattern, and the pattern must take the students slowly through the steps that competent writers naturally take when they write.

One of the most important techniques used in the project is the conference—the one-to-one discussion between teacher and student. Some of these conferences can be held during the class modules while groups are at work or while individual reading is being done. The model school makes every effort to free teachers at least five modules a day, and many or all of these modules can be used for student conferences. Since much of the evaluation of written work goes on during the conference, less time is spent by teachers outside of class working on sets of compositions.

The conference does afford the teacher adequate time to discuss and evaluate a paper. Teachers in the past often neglected to discuss the content of students' themes because it was too time-consuming to write long paragraphs pointing out flaws in reasoning or other inconsistencies, relating ideas to other works or asking thought provoking questions. Too often they settled for a curt comment, "very interesting," or "you don't agree with the author?" How frustrating it must have been to the student who felt as though he labored over his work only to have it cast aside with a superficial comment. The conference period enables the teacher to respond to the students' thoughts, as well as to the expression of them, without hours of writing.

The conference period also enables the teacher to direct the student's attention to his own statements, and the teacher can explain what is expected of him in terms of what he has written. He can point out unsupported generalizations and ask questions to provoke further development. He can question the relationship between statements, point out possible improvements in organization, and even suggest specific changes in word order and word selection more efficiently and directly than he can in writing comments on a theme.

Another advantage is that the tone of the comments can be more effectively tailored to the individual in a conference. The teacher can express satisfaction or disappointment in speaking more readily than in writing. The comments or criticism can more easily be phrased as suggestions and encouragement for improvement of the rewritten version of the paper.

It is recommended that students submit a copy of their total schedule to the English teacher. The teacher then can make out a master plan that will enable him to schedule conferences during the free modules that each student has. Some students will have to be worked with during class time. A written record of conferences should be kept so that teachers know which students have and which have not had conferences. Notations about problems discussed could also be useful reference material for the next scheduled conference.

The purposes of the conference are multiple. During the first part of the year conferences will probably be longer than will be the case later. The conference provides an opportunity to find out such information as the student's reading habits, his interests, his other courses and assignments therein which might be related to his work in composition.

In preparation for the individual conferences, the teacher should spend a few minutes reviewing the work, the attitudes, and the needs of the student coming for consultation. He should have in mind some specific recommendations as well as general comments. If at all possible the student and teacher should be able to meet in an office or conference room that will afford them some privacy.

Another of Murray's methods that we have utilized is the non-grading of papers. The assigned written work is evaluated by the group, and after it has been re-written it is evaluated by the teacher. The teacher is available for help and suggestions anytime, though major critical evaluation is taken care of at the time of the student's conference.

Not placing a grade on papers may be the hardest thing for a teacher to do at first. Instead of defacing a student's paper, the writing teacher should point out the main problem in the paper to the student so that he can correct his own paper by re-searching, re-thinking, re-designing, re-writing, or re-editing it.

Teachers must establish the rationale that students should write more frequently, and the object should be to analyze and solve one problem at a time.

At times it may prove beneficial to edit a paper ruthlessly, showing what needs to be taken care of in the re-writing. A paper can be publicly edited, particularly if a problem evident in the paper is shared by many members in the class. The overhead projector or the opaque projector can be used in this case.

The class should be allowed to correct other students' papers. Mimeographing a theme or composition, keeping the author anonymous, and allowing the students to make serious critical comments can be very helpful to the writer as he re-thinks and re-organizes the paper for revision.

Murray states that grades are meaningless during a writing course; you may be demanding a great deal of a good student and praising a small out-put in a poorer student. Each student is working on problems in his writing that need to be solved, and each student is allowed to work at his own pace. Fear is not a good tool for motivation. Simply because a student in a class does better than the rest is no reason to commend him with an A. Undeserved A's can give a student the idea that he knows how to write when he doesn't.

A folder of each student's work should be kept so that the teacher as well as the student can be aware of progress. It is one of the goals of the project to have the student develop the ability to evaluate his own accomplishments, to perceive his own problems, and to correct them.

As has been made evident from the discussion of the project thus far, the physical arrangement of the classroom needs to be changed from the conventional rows of seats if one is to provide the informal workshop atmosphere necessary for effective writing instruction.

Since there are times when a student has completed his writing assignment, has had his conference, and is waiting for another conference with the instructor, a valuable part of the total program should be a classroom library. Classroom libraries can be built by securing sample copies, using school funds to buy paperbacks, having students belong to the various paperback book clubs and having them contribute the books and the book dividends to the school after they are finished with the books.

Suggested guidelines for individual reading should be set up with the class, including what to look for in selecting a book, how to find theme or purpose, etc. Since one of the aims of the freshman year at Champlain Valley is to acquaint the student with the main characteristics of the basic literary genres, the formal teaching that goes on in relation to each type forms a developing background for free reading and discussion as the year progresses. With the exception of a few required books related to the literature of the freshman curriculum, the year's reading is left up to the student, who knows how much is expected of him through the conferences held with the teacher. The teacher, as he gets to know his students, can use part of the conference time to check their reading progress and to suggest possible books for future reading.

In addition to the techniques of classroom teaching and the basic skills derived from Donald Murray, the La Mancha project depends to a considerable degree upon the sequence of composition units suggested by Dr. James T. Moffett in his text *A Student Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13: A Hand Book for Teachers.* The sequence and the units developed by Moffett can be interchanged without any serious effects upon the progress of the students. It is also felt that the sequence used in the La Mancha curriculum has much to recommend it from the viewpoint of developing skills and of keeping student interest.

The following units and the objectives for each unit will indicate the various areas of skills and techniques developed in the freshman program:

Unit I—*Autobiography and Biography*

Objectives: To give opportunity to write from one's own experience.
To begin to write from sources.
To become familiar with the techniques of autobiography and biography.

Unit II—*Interviewing and Reporting*

Objectives: To develop basic skills in interviewing and reporting, in order to make students more aware of techniques used in mass media.

Unit III—*The Paragraph*

Objectives: To improve the organization of student writing through controlled writing of formal paragraphs.
To make students aware of structure in writing.

Unit IV—*Research Skills*

Objectives: To acquaint students with the details of research form.
To develop ability to seek out information and make wise use of facts and opinions.
To give the students a chance to become familiar with the various resources of the library.
To reinforce the skills already developed.

Note: This is one of the easiest units for interdisciplinary correlation. Early in the year some agreements should be worked out among all cooperating teachers as to the time when research projects will be assigned so that the unit on research skills may be helpful to other courses.

Unit V—*Critical Review*

Objectives: To aid the student to develop a clear, effective style for critical reviewing.

Unit VI—*Creative Writing*

Objectives: To help students develop their own interests and abilities.
To make students aware of the material they have at hand on which to comment.
To help students become involved with the development of style.
To sharpen the students' observational powers, storytelling faculties, sense of form, and ability to use language effectively.
To encourage students' sensitivity, their interest in language sounds, and their perception of subtle relationships between words and images.

Note: Creative writing should be grounded in the experiences of the writer. Thus in teaching creative writing, the teacher must realize that (1) he is not able to teach creativity; (2) creativity is not reserved for the gifted student; (3) writing is difficult; and (4) the student's writing must be met with respect. If these conditions are met, the process can be a pleasure for the student and an experience in thinking.

The La Mancha Literary Magazine is one of the tangible results of this unit. The literary magazine edited by Mrs. Gladys Colburn of Burlington High School has been a source of pride for the La Mancha project and for individual student contributors. The students in the various project schools around the state select manuscripts and submit them to the editor.

Selections representative of various levels of ability of freshmen and sophomores are printed in the literary magazine. Students go through all the anxieties of an author waiting to see if his work will be published. Each of the schools participating in the La Mancha project has contributed a fifty dollar subsidy to cover the cost of publication of the literary magazine.

Unit VII—*Varieties of Language*

Objectives: To help students observe and understand variations in the English language.

To make students aware of standard and non-standard speech in the world around them.

One of the major objectives of the La Mancha project is interdisciplinary cooperation and activity. It is certainly beneficial to the overall educative process to have the instruction in the English classrooms used and reinforced in other subject areas. Cooperation between departments is not lacking at the model school Champlain Valley. The Science and History Departments have been supportive and cooperative. The La Mancha project's biggest obstacle in truly integrating the program with all disciplines has been scheduling. A flexible modular schedule does provide the framework that makes correlation possible.

Study of Mass Media has played an important part in the La Mancha project this year; and extensive use has been made of video tape and film. I would like to outline here the procedures and the materials used in the unit on interviewing and reporting.

UNIT ON INTERVIEWING AND REPORTING

Objectives: To develop basic skills in interviewing and reporting.

To make students more aware of techniques used in mass media.

Materials: Copies of local, state, and national magazines and newspapers.

The La Mancha Newspaper edited by Miss Mary Joslyn of Burlington High School. This newspaper is written and prepared by students in all of the project schools.

First Session

Procedures:

1. Discussion of what constitutes an interview, using types of interviews with which students are already familiar: Newspapers, TV news programs, longer interviews such as the Mike Douglas Show, fan magazines, etc.
2. Use the film *The Interview* (UVM Film Library) to expand information.
3. Teacher leads discussion on the function of an interview as a process of sharing information and feelings.
4. Clear summary of the purpose of and the reasons for the importance of the interview in today's society.

Assignment: Select some famous living person and develop a set of questions which you feel would give insight into his personality.

Second Session

1. Presentation and discussion of the questions prepared for assignment. If a question does not meet requirements for good questioning, the class should analyze why the question is weak and decide how it can be rephrased.
2. Discussion of what the interviewer should do to prepare for the interview: finding biographical material, becoming aware of personal interests of the subject to be interviewed, arranging for the meeting, formulating questions, etc.
3. As a practice exercise, the teacher names someone familiar to all the students and the class develops questions that might be asked.

Assignment: Each member of the class develops interview questions for a person chosen by the class. One group within the class is selected to preview the questions and report to the class the questions they find best for developing an accurate, interesting interview. The groups will also indicate what questions were most frequently asked, etc.

The video tape recorder is usually used to tape the interviews.

Students also are able to use super 8mm film equipment to film interviews and to make a short documentary film.

This practice has been quite successful.

Third Session

1. After the selected group has had time to organize its report, it presents material to the class.
2. The teacher then sets up class interviews in which each student selects or is assigned to interview another. In about ten minutes the students are to prepare the questions that they will use in the interview.
3. The interview takes place. (Remind the students they will need to get biographical information as well as information about the current activities and opinions of their subject.)

Assignment: From the information acquired in class interview, write an accurate, informative interview for next session. Length is not a factor, but make certain to cover enough topics so that the paper will have a high interest level.

Fourth Session

1. Group reading of interviews, with specific suggestions for improvement. Students should write specific suggestions on these papers as they read them.

2. After the group selects its best paper, the writer reads his interview to the class, with class comments after each reading.
3. If time permits, begin rewriting.

Assignment: Revised papers to be due at the next class session. The best papers will be selected by groups and submitted to either the school paper or the freshman class paper. (It is expected that the freshman classes will combine material for a *class paper* which will appear from time to time as material becomes available. The several classes will share the responsibility for its publication.)

FIFTH SESSION

1. The beginning of the class period is given over to individual selection of a person in the community who the students feel would be good material for an interview. Priority might be given to some one who could be interviewed in regard to some aspect of history or science. The history and science teachers may have some good suggestions in advance.
2. After the students have had time to make tentative selections, they will share their selection with the class to get reaction to and suggestions about interviewing the person selected. Some will have good ideas for where to get in touch with the prospective interviewee and what questions to ask.
3. Teacher leads discussion of the etiquette of interviews and makes very clear the ground rules: making proper arrangements for the interview, having well organized questions, offering to let the interviewee read the completed paper, respecting confidences, etc.

Assignment: Make arrangements for the interview. Be ready to share with the class your experiences in setting up the interview, noting especially any things which you would do differently another time.

SIXTH SESSION

Since securing the interview may take several days, other work may be injected for a session or two. There are, however, other things which may be beneficial to consider while the interviews and the writing of them go on.

1. The teacher may video tape sections of newscasts which are interviews, selecting a wide range of people and subjects.
2. After viewing the tape, the students should discuss the techniques the interviewer used to get important information.
3. Were there weak spots in the interview that could have been prevented?
4. Show a video tape of one of the major network "talk shows" (Mike Douglas, Johnny Carson, etc.) and make comparison with the news type.

Assignment: Bring to next session several interviews from newspapers or magazines. Be certain to read them carefully and be able to comment on them.

SEVENTH SESSION

1. Reading of some of the interviews brought in by students; comments on effectiveness from the entire class. Some good and some weak ones should be used. Application of the observations about these interviews should prove helpful to students as they work on their own.
2. Teacher sets a deadline for the rough draft of interview and makes note of any students who may need a conference session.
3. In-class work on interviews as time permits, with work continuing outside of class.

EIGHTH SESSION

1. Groups work on rough drafts, with selection of the best from each group to be read aloud. This will give motivation for further revision.
2. Teacher begins discussion of the art of reporting —what to look for in a news situation, need for accuracy, etc.

Assignment: Continue revision of interviews. Watch at least one complete newscast this evening, noting good points and unsatisfactory ones. Listen also to one complete radio newscast. Try to find a TV and a radio program which cover the same story. Make a list of the similarities and differences in the coverage by the two media.

NINTH SESSION

1. Using material the students bring in, discussion led by teacher of what makes a good report and what makes a weak one; items to be covered include these: biased reporting, fair play doctrine, factual approach as opposed to "usually reliable sources," quoting out of context, etc.
2. Teacher leads up to the writing assignment of a reporter's version of an incident which they have seen in the course of the day at school; students are to visualize how that incident might be retold by a news reporter.

Assignment: Using Mr. Murray's system of 150 specifics, get ready to write a news report on some incident at school.

TENTH SESSION

1. Use the groups for each student to tell of the incident and to show his specifics to the others.
2. The teacher reviews the technique of writing news stories: the lead sentence of the 5 W's (Who, What, When, Where, Why), the inverted pyramid construction (most important facts first, tapering to least important), the short sentences

and paragraphs, exact names and addresses, etc. (Mr. Murray's book is very helpful at this point.)

3. Begin work on the lead paragraph of the news story.

Assignment: Rework the lead paragraph.

ELEVENTH SESSION

1. Group reading of papers and selection of the best ones for class reading.

Interdisciplinary correlation is still an important objective of the La Mancha Project. Some schools have been able to achieve correlation; others have not. With good intentions, too often cooperative departments still find themselves being thwarted by scheduling problems. It is certainly beneficial to the educative process to have the instruction in the English classrooms reinforced in other subject areas and to have interests created in other disciplines used in the work done in English.

In the units outlined, such provision can be made for interdisciplinary work, and administrators must cope with the problem of scheduling to provide each school system with a truly flexible schedule.

In conclusion, the combination of Murray, Moffett, and Mass Media with a team of dedicated teachers in the project has made it possible to report that the La Mancha project is alive and well and thriving at Champlain Valley in Hinesburg.

THE TENTH GRADE EXPERIMENT

by

CHARITY GREENWOOD
Champlain Valley Union High School

The tenth grade college bound program at Champlain Valley Union High School has been a rather unusual and exciting one. There have been several basic differences in the planning and evaluating techniques employed by the teachers in the program. The planning was done on a bi-weekly basis at the University of Vermont. Involved regularly with this planning board were Dr. Frank Manchel of the University English Department and nine teachers from schools involved in the project. The procedure at the Saturday planning sessions was to develop the plans for the ensuing two weeks and in turn to evaluate and discuss what had taken place in the various schools and classrooms during the previous two weeks. With this type of meeting came a constant re-evaluation of the project and the current program. It has also been possible to work out schedules to share equipment and materials, some belonging to the project and some privately owned by the participating school districts. This kind of sharing was extremely beneficial, as it enabled more schools to use large amounts of equipment and material at a sharply reduced cost to all concerned. We were also fortunate to have several guests lecturers, including Dr. Betty Bandel of the English Department of the University of Vermont who gave a presentation about teaching *Julius Caesar* in the high school. Dr. Virginia Clark was also involved with *The Language Inquiry* on a later Saturday.

This project may very well be the first evidence in the country of a year-long team teaching venture among so many schools. In order for a program of this magnitude to work, however, it must begin with a highly motivated and dedicated group of teachers. We feel that the participating teachers have been one of the strongest aspects of our program this year.

The Program

- Speech
- Drama (*The Diary of Anne Frank*)
- Shakespeare (*Julius Caesar*)
- Contemporary Live Production (*The Young Martin Luther King*)
- Film
- Thematic Unit (*The Caine Mutiny Court Martial*): Book-film-play

We began this year's program with a unit in drama using *Teaching Language and Literature* by Walter Loban, Margaret Ryan, and James R. Squire. The unit began with the study of an individual play by the class. We were working with *The Diary of Anne Frank*. The play was given three readings, so to speak, with each one designed for a different but specific purpose. The initial reading was done in class as quickly as possible in order to familiarize the students with the story and the characters in the play. During our discussion of characters we used materials from *The Teaching of High School English* by J. N. Hook. As supplementary material to accompany this play we spent one day on the poem "An Ex-basketball Player" by John Updike to show how words can suggest meanings, and how the author, in the first two lines of the poem:

> Pearl Avenue runs past the high school lot,
> Bends with the trolley tracks, and stops, cut off . . .

sets a scene with descriptive adjectives, establishes a mood, and introduces character and a theme.

We spent another day on the dramatic monologue "My Last Duchess" by Robert Browning as an exercise in showing how an author lets a character reveal himself while talking about someone else. The dramatist gives the dramatic monologue to several characters and creates a play. For the student the dramatic monologue is an exercise in learning to react.

Next we added the element of setting. The students were given the stage directions and settings for eight or nine plays and asked to interpret clues given by the author and to determine how the setting conveys facts and feelings.

The second reading of the class play was designed for discussion and rereading of key lines and scenes. The emphasis in the second reading was placed on critical skills and required that the student possess a literary vocabulary and that he learn to analyze to play.

The third and final reading was an oral presentation of scenes by class groups. The emphasis in this activity was on oral interpretation and not on complicated production problems. The oral interpretation was basically to show the student's skill in assuming another character's identity and in his basic understanding of the lines. The students were required to memorize the lines outside of class but were allowed in-class time for rehearsal. Each of these scenes was video taped to allow the performers an opportunity to analyze along with the rest of the class.

We showed the movie *The Diary of Anne Frank* as a synthesizing element for this unit. The film helped to put the play back together for the students who had spent several weeks tearing it apart.

Concurrent with these studies, a library of plays were placed on reserve in the school library. Students were to choose a second play from this selection. They were then divided into groups and were asked to dramatize scenes from these second plays. Again the video tape was a valuable aid to evaluation. A paper was also designed with the emphasis for the writing to be placed on some aspect of character development.

A longer paper was then assigned which was to involve a third play from the reserve list. The paper was to be either an analysis of one play or a comparison of some aspect of two or more plays. I feel that next year the topics for the long paper should be a little more specific and more carefully thought out by the students, as the papers did not measure up to the standards of the rest of the unit. Dramatizing the scenes was one of the more successful and better learning experiences in this unit. The students also kept a bibliography of all plays read and made comments concerning each play. We will have a list of those plays which were the most popular and successful to help in next year's selection of reserve plays.

Some of the problems which we faced in the drama unit were 1) teaching the student to visualize the play as he read it, 2) learning that much of the material in a play comes from implication rather than direct statement, 3) attempting to hear a play as the actor would speak it, and 4) seeing a play as a complete work of art.

The second phase of the program was a unit in Shakespearean drama. The class play was *Julius Caesar*. We opened the study by using Plutarch's notes and asking the students to write their own plays in groups of five. About two days into the study, the students decided this approach was a disaster. They found Plutarch far too difficult to read and understand, and we determined that is was not worth the class time to study the notes before studying the play. The only positive aspect was that the students now have tremendous admiration for what Shakespeare did with the notes that they couldn't understand.

We began by doing a choral reading of the play. This was tedious at first as the students found it very difficult to read the lines. They improved as days went on, and when they began to get the rhythm of the lines they enjoyed the oral reading a great deal. It was necessary to spend a great deal of time on line-by-line interpretation after the initial reading, but it was essential before we could discuss character development and the political implications of the play.

The students presented two scenes from the play and once more utilized the video tape to make self-evaluation more meaningful. This time a little more emphasis was placed on costumes and blocking, but the main project was still the character and line analysis.

The film version of *Julius Caesar,* starring Marlon Brando and James Mason, was a fine wrap-up for the unit, as it gave the class an opportunity to see how professional actors and directors interpreted the same play they had been working with for several weeks.

Several writing assignments were done as the unit progressed. The Signet Classic edition of *Julius Caesar* was the source for the following topics:

1) "A just man in public life may very well bring about catastrophe."
2) "Why man's worth as a private individual does not ensure his value as a public ruler."
3) Caesar maintains the power of public office while as a private citizen he demonstrates many weaknesses.

One assignment was a take-home project and the other an in-class theme.

The third unit of the program was to study a contemporary play, *The Young Martin Luther King,* and to see the production of the play by a professional company from the Lincoln Center Repertory Theater. This activity was jointly sponsored by La Mancha and the Lilliput Children's Theater. Mrs. June Aschenbach is responsible, in large part, for the coordination of the two groups. The study began with the reading of the script and study guide questions concerning the background material and production problems for the play. A composition topic was assigned concerning the theme of the play. Class discussions centered mainly around the problems of blocking, costumes, lighting, and sets. The students then went to Memorial Auditorium where the play was staged. Two students were part of the backstage crew, and four more were ushers. This enabled six students to see the behind-the-scenes activities of a professional company. A question-and-answer period after the performance was an extremely valuable and unusual experience for the more than 1600 students who attended the two performances. A writing project following the performance involved the effectiveness of the play on stage as compared with the script version.

We are currently working on a ten-week film program. This involves a series of lectures, screenings, and discussion periods. It is basically divided into three units: 1) history of film; 2) viewing, appreciating, and criticizing films; and 3) making films. The purpose of the film unit is to develop film literacy, to teach students 1) the art of film, 2) the technique of film, and 3) the technology of film. Dr. Frank Manchel has been a guest lecturer on several occasions.

We have constructed a film workroom at C.V.U. in which all equipment is stored. The room contains editors, storyboards, lights, and camera equipment. Much of the individual student work will be done in this room.

In connection with this unit, many students participated in the Stowe Film Festival-Workshop. At the workshop they attended lectures on how to use film equipment and on technique. They spent time viewing student films made prior to the conference and then listened to a panel of experts who discussed the films. The students then were divided into small groups and planned their own 8mm colored-film experience which they completed the next day. These films will be spliced on several large reels and circulated to participating schools. They will also be shown at the La Mancha Spring Conference and again at the C.V.U. Film Festival in May. The Stowe Film Festival was especially beneficial at this time as most students are virtually beginners in film activities and so are a majority of teachers. The students were able to bring home a great deal of information and a wide variety of ideas for the individual student films to be made in the next few weeks. We are very grateful to Mr. Donn McCafferty, State Department of Education Consultant in Humanities, Mr. J. Harry Feldman of Stowe Preparatory High School, and Mrs. Elise Lataille of Stowe High School, who made this such a successful learning experience.

The projected course of study for the final month of this year is a comparative study of how three different media treat the same subject. We will be doing *The Caine Mutiny Court Martial*: book, play, and movie. This should make an excellent concluding unit and will, we hope, bring the year's work together for the students.

In keeping with the writing emphasis in the program, this year's classes have done a great deal of writing in conjunction with the study in each unit. The writing has been mostly expository, with the exception of that done for the La Mancha magazine. There will also be some creative writing to be done in connection with film scripts in the next few weeks. The class small-group analysis system has been continued in the tenth grade project. No grades have been given on papers, and the evaluation has been done by students in class and by teachers in individual conferences. I was provided with several periods a day in which to schedule the many conferences necessary. Formal testing has not been done; instead, in-class essays were substituted, and the conferences served as an evaluation of these papers. The standard take-home test or essay was also ungraded but discussed in conference. The students have received no grades in the course, but a written evaluation was sent on the report cards at the end of each marking term. A final course grade will be assigned for transcript purposes. The grade will be based on effort, improvement, accomplishments, and growth.

There is one basic change which seems evident in next year's format. It would appear wise that we begin the program with the film unit. We found that we were using the skills from the film unit as a teaching tool in many other units. The video tape would be far more useful if we had studied the use and handling of a camera. We used the video tape fairly often, but with more students familiar with this machine I believe we could use it even more frequently and to better advantage another year.

We also anticipate the addition of a unit on T.V. in the program next year. This will probably follow the unit on film and will take four or five weeks. Such a unit was not possible this year because the project was six weeks late in starting.

The speech activities next year should be incorporated into each unit. I believe that the following speech skills can be integrated with the existing plans: 1) oral interpretation in the drama units, 2) speeches to inform in all units, and 3) panel discussions in the film and T.V. units. I think the inclusion of these skills in the course will add a great deal to the success of the program.

Another addition to the program next year, through the efforts of Mr. Donn McCafferty, is a humanities *Program in the Performing Arts for Students and Teachers* at Lincoln Center and in-school performances of selected programs by Lincoln Center performers.

In retrospect, I feel that the program has been highly experimental this year. However, from our successes and failures this year, we should have a solid program for the tenth grade college-bound students next year.

Participating Schools

Sister Dolores Burke, Rice Memorial High School
Edward Darling, Fair Haven High School
Beverly Devino, Milton High School
Charity Greenwood, Champlain Valley Union High School
Joseph Laiacona, Vergennes High School
Leonard Nadeau, Rutland High School
Heather Scofield, Burlington High School
Jean Watson, Spaulding High School
Frank Wilbur, Spaulding High School

Film Bibliography

Citizen Kane, R-K-O, 119 min., Films Incorporated ($35).

The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Universal, 114 min., Films Incorporated ($29).

M.G.M.'s Big Parade of Comedy, M.G.M., 109 min., Films Incorporated ($22).

The Quiet Man, Republic, 129 min., Films Incorporated ($35).

Roman Holiday, Paramount, 118 min., Films Incorporated ($29).

The Slender Thread, Paramount, 100 min., Films Incorporated ($35).

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Knight, Arthur. *The Liveliest Art.* New York: Macmillan, 1957.

Loban, Walter, Ryan, Margaret, and Squire, James R. *Teaching Language and Literature.* Second Edition. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. 1969.

Manchel, Frank. *When Movies Began to Speak.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.

Manchel, Frank. *When Pictures Began to Move.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.

MacGowan, Kenneth. *Behind the Screen.* New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1965.

Moffett, James. *Teaching the Universe of Discourse.* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1968.

Pincus, Edward. *Guide to Filmmaking.*

THE NINTH GRADE AND MEDIA

by

JEAN MINOTTI AND ALISON DAYTON
Champlain Valley Union High School

The Mass Communication course for ninth grade general students at Champlain Valley Union High School evolved because the existing courses provided them with neither interest, useful information nor motivation. Our rationale for developing our program was that the study could be used as a vehicle for achieving in a more meaningful way many of the same skills (ability to think, listen, read and understand, and express oneself effectively both orally and in writing) taught in traditional programs. Similarly, it was our contention that the students in this group, so influenced by and involved with the media, would find the study of and creating in the various media more meaningful than a literature-centered curriculum. With these ideas in mind we developed our program.

Our major units included a study of a) what communication is and how it operates, b) books, c) newspapers, d) magazines, e) advertising, f) records/radio/tapes, g) television, and h) film.

We began this year with a brief orientation to the program and arrived at a useful definition of communication as being a sharing or exchange of ideas and feelings. We used the Shannon-Weaver diagram as a key to understanding the difference between intended and received meanings. We found this a brief, but necessary and important, unit.

Immediately following this introduction was a unit on books in which we read *Shane* as a means to explore narration and structure, as well as to gain insight into the book's meaning. We also investigated how a book is written, printed, and published. Techniques used included reading the blurbs on the cover and the first page, followed by the writing of a paper attempting to anticipate what the book might concern and how it would end. We also tried rewriting from a different point of view. A week was devoted to silent in-class reading, followed by class discussion and panel work. *Shane* proved to be an excellent choice for these students, both in terms of reading level and interest value. A follow-up with the movie version of *Shane* was extremely successful, and although the film was shown after school (3:00-4:30) almost *every* student stayed to see and enjoy it. We compared and contrasted the two media and tried to suggest *why* the differences exist. A field trip to Queen City Printers Inc. and talks by Dr. Manchel on the writing of *Movies and How They are Made* and by Mrs. Ripley Quinby on literary agents helped give the students further knowledge about the work and effort involved in the creation of a book. This book unit was followed, later in the year, by reading *The Sea of Grass,* and by much free individualized reading.

The newspaper unit involved small groups creating a newspaper designed to serve a community of their own devising (any year, place, population, etc.). This was done with *no* previous study. Then after the students created, produced, and evaluated their first editions, we received daily copies of *The Burlington Free Press* to enable us to study slanted writing, the five W's of newspaper writing, and the kinds and purposes of cartoons. This was followed by the creation of a second group newspaper and the collecting of advertisements to determine the kinds of businesses that *do* advertise in newspapers. A field trip to *The Burlington Free Press* helped indicate to the class the magnitude and importance of newspaper production. Further, each student was provided with a free copy of the paper for a period of three weeks. They enjoyed the local daily paper, particularly when they could share it with their families.

We expanded the advertising assignment into a unit consisting of a) understanding of techniques and devices used in persuasion, b) analyses of advertisements, and c) creating advertisements for magazines, radio, and television. We prepared several transparencies of magazine ads and used the overhead projector for class discovery and discussion of techniques. Groups cut out ads from magazines to create a bulletin board and then wrote analyses of the ads. We used large sheets of paper for the creation of their magazine ads, the tape recorder for radio, and the video tape recorder for television commercials. This seemed to be an enjoyable unit for the students, though we, as teachers, felt we went only halfway to our goal. Students thought that they studied advertisements in order to learn techniques rather than to understand how to judge, evaluate, and comprehend advertising. This limitation was partially offset by individual reports of dishonest advertising as found in *Consumer Reports,* but more work by the teachers is still needed on this unit.

The magazine unit began with the entire class reading *Life* magazine, followed by the study and creation of picture essays. Most students chose to cut pictures out of magazines, but a few took their own photographs. Then the class broke into groups and studied a diversified assortment of magazines, answering a variety of questions such as: for whom is the magazine written, what is its purpose, what is your opinion of the magazine, would you buy it if you saw it in a store, etc. This unit was interesting to the students because we read and studied magazines important to them (for example, *Seventeen, Cycle, Teen, Vermont Life,* etc.). Studying current issues proved to be a valuable motivating factor, and students would read silently for days. During the magazine unit, we also provided students with copies of last year's *La Mancha Magazine*. This helped spur great interest in creative writing, and it was at this time that we worked our hardest on preparing material for *this* year's magazine.

We combined a record, radio and tape unit to create a listening/speaking sequence for the students. We listened to records that students brought to class in an attempt to discover what and how they communicate. We used the tape series *Listen and Think* from Educational Developmental Laboratories, Inc. and followed the different lessons (understanding humor, speaker's purpose, foreshadowing and climax, etc.) with records that demonstrate these lessons (Bill Cosby, speeches of John Kennedy, short stories of Edgar Allen Poe). We read short stories in class and discussed how to eliminate narration to create radio plays. The students then chose stories, made plays out of them, and taped them. Similarly, we discussed the kinds and purposes of interviews, and pairs of students prepared radio interviews. They had the choice of interviewing someone in the school, or pretending to be someone famous and then creating a believable interview. Other techniques included listening to radio news and discussing the differences from newspaper reporting, changing newspaper articles to news reports, having a speaker come from a local radio station and then taking a field trip to the same station. At the time of this writing, we are in the middle of the unit, so it is impossible to evaluate it completely. It does appear, however, to be both valuable and necessary.

We have planned our film unit to begin with slides that demonstrate techniques such as long, medium, and close-up shots, followed by practice and perfection of these techniques. We will take the class outside and take turns with one student or a pair of students doing the actual shooting. The rest of the class will hold empty cameras so they can at least "pretend" while awaiting their turn. We will provide them with pictures to arrange in stories to give them a sense of sequence and will show several short films that utilize techniques they too can use. We will show films, discuss them, and then show them again. We plan to create first a class film, and then group films. The unit will be climaxed by a "film festival" for these three La Mancha classes.

The year will end with our television unit. We will assign each student a television show to discuss, and after analysis of commercial television, we will write and produce our own television show (including commercials), using the video tape recorder.

The Mass Communications Program for ninth grade general students has proved to be a significant experience for both the students and the teachers involved. The students really enjoyed "creating" their own newspapers, advertisements, interviews, etc., and liked to work on projects in which they could succeed. Similarly, they benefited greatly from group work. Although this was difficult to initiate and students felt inhibited and embarrassed at first, gradually productive working groups began to emerge. Some students who would not participate in class discussions were much more involved in their small group activities. Likewise, the benefits of students learning from and helping each other were great. Often their peers could reach students that we, as teachers, were unable to help or motivate.

The field trips helped make these students realize they were a "special" class. All looked forward to them and felt, for example, that a trip to the *Free Press* plant was much more informative than studying about it in class. Similarly, as a result of these trips, other non-La Mancha classes often begged to go as well.

Students also looked forward to films, particularly those short enough (10-20 minutes) so that we could view, discuss, and then see them again, all in the same module.

Our feelings of success with these students, however, are not limited to only our personal feelings or opinions. The Guidance Department at our school told us that very few of our students requested to be transferred to other classes compared to students of the same level *not* involved in the Mass Communications Program.

These successes were not immediate or easily achieved, however. Rather, they were brought about only by continued work in evaluating, organizing, reorganizing, and re-evaluating our material. We made several changes in the individual units in an attempt to change the orientation of the program so that students would *produce* in the different media, rather than merely learn *about* them. Thus they created their own newspaper, advertisements, interviews, etc. In conjunction with this, we greatly condensed previously prepared materials in several units and eliminated entirely other material as being (a) of too low interest value to these students, (b) too difficult for them to read and understand, and (c) out-dated.

We are pleased but not yet satisfied with our program. Next year we plan to start the year with a week or so of orientation, creative writing, and group work, followed immediately by the Film unit. Our reasons are twofold: (1) to help students realize immediately that this is a "different" class, to help combat the idea that we are "saving the best until last"; and (2) so they will be able to utilize film knowledge they acquire in evaluating movies that they will see the rest of the year. Other plans include devoting more time to free reading (perhaps a week per marking period), and providing students with outline plans for each unit. These students seem to function best when they know exactly where they are going and what is expected of them. We also plan to save the writing topic, "What a Day Would Be Like Without Mass Media," until the end of the year.

Perhaps the final summation and evaluation of the program should be left to the students, one of whom said, "This sure is better than English class last year." We hope that it is. We also hope that our program will continue to change and improve and grow.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MATERIALS AND PRICES

BOOKS

Shane	.60 ea.
Sea of Grass	.50 ea.
Movies and How They Are Made	3.95 ea.
When Pictures Began to Move	3.95 ea.

MAGAZINES

(We could not obtain discounts)
Life 25 copies
5 copies of each of the following:
Look
Seventeen
Ingenue
Teen
Vermont Life
Nevada
Ski
Photography
Cycle
Science Digest
Outdoor Life
Argosy
True

Total—$17.60

TAPES

Listen and Think—Level 6
Educational Development Laboratories
Huntington, New York

Total price $97.50

RECORDS

Poems and Tales of Edgar Allan Poe (1965)—Volume 3, Caedmon $5.95
Sorry, Wrong Number, Album No. Dell-2, Decca
Popular music brought in by students

FILMS WE USED

from University of Vermont—AV center	
Eye of the Beholder	$ 3.65 rental
A Newspaper Serves Its Community	1.50 rental
The Hunter and the Forest	1.65 rental
from Boston University	
Television Serves Its Community	4.00 rental
A Communications Model	7.80 rental
Films Incorporated	
Shane	19.75 rental
Citizen Kane	35.00 rental
Mass Media Ministries	
The Magician	10.00 rental
from Pyramid Film Producers	
Why Man Creates	15.00 rental
from Swank Pictures, Inc.	
Time of the Horn	7.50 rental
from Brandon Films	
Carnival	5.00 rental
Run	12.50 rental
from New England Telephone	
Alphabet Conspiracy	free
from The Ski Rack	
Ski the Outer Limits	free

HANDOUTS WE USED

Shannon diagram
Comparison of the novel and the film
Advertising terms and meanings
Checklist for television

FIELD TRIPS

Queen City Printers Inc.
Burlington Free Press
Vermont Educational Television

THE SCORING OF PAPERS—LA MANCHA SOPHOMORES
or
THE SECOND-YEAR SLUMP

by

ROBERT W. COCHRAN

University of Vermont

At this time a year ago, I suggested an ambitious if not indeed elaborate program for measuring the impact of the La Mancha Project on participating students' ability to write. I recommended, for instance, that we stretch our tape measure across from each student's 1968 fall performance to his 1970 spring performance. I also intended to compare not only these extremes of his two academic years, but also the means. That is, I thought it would be interesting to compare spring 1969 to fall 1970 and to chuckle indulgently over the sharp dip (represented graphically) in the performance levels of students deprived of our expert instruction for so long a period as three months of summer vacation.

And then, with these favorable statistics cunningly fashioned into back-patters, we might have proceeded, I thought, to an analysis of the progress made between last spring and this. That progress would have been less dramatic than the fall to spring progress because of that same laughable but predictable summer-induced dip, but it would nonetheless have been a record of solid achievement.

But such plans were hatched in the warmth of the glow of last year's happy results. Those plans now appear visionary to a degree marvellously appropriate to a project named La Mancha. Let us summarily abandon those year-old schemes, then, in the cold grayness of the ashes of this year's debacle, fiasco, disaster (choose a word, any word, so long as it smacks of shame and ignominy).

First, I shall announce the chilling results and then I shall attempt to fix much of the responsibility. Finally, I shall suggest possible remedies, shamelessly pretending that anyone who could so misjudge what this year was to hold in store should nonetheless be trusted to provide needed cures to return the patient to the health it seemed so recently to enjoy.

Last year, each fall and spring paper was read only once; this year every paper was given two readings. To lend further reliability, the same two readers who read a folder of papers from a given school in the fall read the folder from that school in the spring. As it turned out, we need not have bothered to tighten up our procedures in any such diligent fashion.

In all, 255 students who wrote fall papers also wrote in the spring. Of that number, 155 were members of La Mancha classes and an even 100 were members of control groups. These are the results:

	La Mancha		*Control*
Higher combined scores in spring	31	approx 20%	19
Lower combined scores in spring	92	approx 60%	40
No change in combined score	32	approx 20%	41
	155		100

How are we to account for the poor spring performances of so many? Part of the answer probably lies in the season itself. Last year's freshman moaned when asked to write "again" for La Mancha measurement. Those same students, now sophomores, were even more outspoken. The simple fact seems to be that kids do not accept their elders' whims either good naturedly or otherwise in these latter days, and especially in a springtime of these latter days.

At least some of us thought that we had a good topic for the spring. The fall topic—mass media, its influence on violence—had proved too sophisticated for some. Students discussed violence all right, but often without reference to any role which publicity might play in furthering or perpetuating it. With the benefit of this experience, I framed for the spring a topic which I thought would elicit an immediate gut response: the judging of a person on the basis of personal grooming or want of grooming. It now appears that the topic was either too close to home (and school) and thus nothing teen-agers felt they could write about "for" adult readers, or it was such a tired topic that the students had long since spent on it all the passion they intended to.

What should be tried another year? I have received from the teacher-readers some excellent suggestions (in one case, a teacher relayed a student's recommendations). These suggestions include 1) asking the students to view and then write about a painting or other art object, 2) building the writing topics into the year's reading, 3) posing for the students some problem situation and asking them to write about how they would act to solve the problem (the problem might be a problem of moral choice), and 4) conducting a discussion of the writing topic by the entire class, so that students might warm to the subject before they began to write.

Above all, two changes seem to me absolutely necessary. First of all, I think the teachers involved should meet and select the topics. Second, whether the topics are built into the year's course of study or not, the writing dates should be so neatly woven into the total fabric of the year's work that the students cannot know when the great bird is about to swoop down and collect their papers for evaluation. There should be no perceptible difference between the paper to be read in concert by assembled readers and the paper written for the student's own teacher—no difference in paper used, in endorsement of indicating authorship, in distribution of topic, or in inflection of voice or bodily gesture by the instructor.

In short and in sum, I recommend for next year a little common-sense sneakiness. For if these students, whether La Mancha or control, have learned to write better this year, they have been remarkably successful in disguising the fact.

HISTORY AND LA MANCHA

by

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American education at all levels, elementary, secondary, and higher education; American education of all forms, public, private and parochial; American education in all settings, rural, suburban, and urban is in a state of crisis as to survival and in a condition of self-doubt and near bankruptcy as to purpose. Criticism and vigorous attacks emanate from many sources and segments of the public. The nature and content of much of the criticism and many of the attacks are not new. Historically, public education has suffered in this way a number of times in the past. Neither are the sources of these criticisms and attacks new phenomena for the most part. Certain of the criticisms and attacks, however, have assumed new forms.

What is new? The most obvious and the most threatening aspect is the intense sense of activism, the constant agitation. and the willingness to resort to violence. Secondly, and probably equally threatening to many, is the new and emerging role of students and their involvement in the attacks on education.

The cry for relevance resounding throughout the land is too critical to be ignored. Granted, students frequently are not able to articulate what they mean or intend by relevance, especially in any positive way. Frequently the meaning of irrelevance comes through loud and clear. Granted, one man's relevance can be another man's boredom; and granted, relevance carries a sense of the cheap or the transitory for many. Still, for teachers to be purposely irrelevant is for teachers to be irresponsible. It is probably fair to assert that history and literature teachers, those teachers most engaged in the humanities in the secondary schools, find themselves confronted by demands from students for relevance as much as, if not more than, teachers in any other field of discipline in the schools.

This is strange. There is not an area or field of study in school that is more pregnant with relevance than the humanities. At the same time, there is not a portion of the total school curriculum more misconstrued, more mistaught, more cut up and divided, than the humanities.

It is still true that in many ways colleges and universities exert powerful inflences on secondary schools. These influences are not as direct as they were in the late 19th century and on into the first three decades of the 20th century. The Committee of Ten Report in 1893 succeeded in mandating what was and what was to be the curriculum for many generations of high school students. This influence and domination have been maintained to a considerable degree through college entrance examination and college admission requirements.

The last two or three decades have seen a more insidious kind of influence and domination of secondary school curriculum by the colleges and universities. This is the direct result of the fostering of intensive academic specialization: specialization by individuals, and here and there specialization by institutions. Many high school teachers, especially history and literature teachers, are prepared by liberal arts colleges. Frequently these colleges deny they are actually preparing teachers for the schools. However, the main point is that the intellectual fare of these students tends to reflect the fragmentation of knowledge brought about in large part by specialization. Graduates of these programs take this fragmented, disjointed notion of knowledge with them into the schools as teachers. Lacking an intellectual experience of their own that is integrative, it is irrational to expect them as teachers to be able to function in a manner to allow their students to have an integrative learning experience.

History and literature become less than history and literature as each is submitted to the scalpel of the narrowly trained specialist. A result of this over time has been a gradual dehumanization of both history and literature, a dehumanization of the ideas and content given to students in high school classrooms.

The history of history in this country since the turn of the century is illustrative of this process. The nature of history up to the end of the 19th century was narrative, political history. Much of this history was narrowly conceived, parochial, and nationalistic, but it did have some redeeming virtues. This old-style history was vitally concerned with the role and place of human beings in the past. The new history most of us are familiar with has a different nature. Looked at as a whole, it is less likely to be narrowly conceived, parochial, and nationalistic. Many influences have caused a broadening of history—so much so that for some time now old-fashioned political history has been the whipping boy of the profession.

The most important influences have been:

1) The professionalization of the historian;
2) The "new history" of Robinson and Beard—social, intellectual, economic, cultural history;
3) The impact of science and the scientific method;
4) The emphasis on interpretation;
5) The increasing role of the social sciences—and with this the effort to make history a social science.

Each of these has made positive and important contributions to history and to a more sophisticated understanding of the past—but the total impact has been less than happy. For too many teachers history has become the study of ideas, the study of forces, the study of interpretations—to the exclusion of the study of man, his institutions, and society. Most American history textbooks contain descriptions and analyses of periods from the past so sophisticated and full of insight that those who lived, worked, and died during those periods would not recognize them as their time in the past.

Certainly the study of literature and the study of history have much in common. The human being, his hopes, successes, fears, failures, powers, weaknesses, is at the center of a good deal of literature. It may be terribly old fashioned to say so, but history consists in large part of the same elements. Without the human being as he is, there would be no history, there would be no reason for history. In the study and teaching of literature and of history, we quickly leap from the human being to forces—social, economic, political, societal, intellectual, and so on. Some of this is legitimate; but when the human being is completely lost, perhaps it becomes unethical and irrational.

It is precisely here that the humanities—especially history and literature—become devoid of relevance; the increasing sophistication of techniques and content removes the probability of meaningful identification by the student. History and literature have very personal and significant things to say to high school students.

One development of major proportions which has been largely ignored is that the monopoly of education long held by the public schools has been broken up in dramatic fashion. The "trustbuster" in this case is not a part of the educational establishment; in fact, it is not considered to be in the educational enterprise at all by most laymen and by too many educators. The trustbuster is the mass media. For generations educators put up with, and even praised, the theater, radio, selected mass circulation magazines, newspapers, the dance, art exhibits, and museums as supportive apparatus for education. It used to be said that these could be considered culturally enriching—they were not thought of as competitive. As little time ago as in the 1950's, the only mass media artifact that was considered competitive—and of course harmful—was the comic book. And I guess some people included the "my true romance" magazines in the same category.

This monopoly was broken sometime in the 1960's. For different students the breakdown occurred at different times. For some it was television, for some it was the new movies, for some the new music, for some the new poetry, for some the new mass magazines, and for some it was drugs. For some it was most if not all of these.

There has been a second interloper that has done its share to break this educational monopoly. It took the form of a new kind of activism best exemplified by the civil rights movement, the new political involvement with the Kennedy phenomena, the Peace Corps, poverty programs, and now student power, black power, the crisis of the cities, and the recent surge to problems of ecology and environment. It is remarkable how little response has come from the schools. There are moments when one is ready to believe that someone somewhere has hatched a huge conspiracy to insure that all of this must be ignored.

One major point must be made. There is a strong probability that the educational impact or payoff for students has been much greater in many ways than the educational impact or payoff from the formal educational institutions has been for students.

The concentrated emphasis during the past decade on cognitive learning has had certain detrimental effects on both the teaching of history and the teaching of literature. Even before this emphasis, too many intelligent and well-prepared teachers were able to consider their disciplines and their teaching exclusively in intellectual and cognitive ways. For many reasons this meant that there were only certain legitimate ways for students to learn. The two ways most frequently utilized were reading books and listening to teacher-talk. Other ways of learning carried—and still carry—a sense of illegitimacy, a lack of dignity, that is beyond the pale.

As a direct consequence, many existing teaching and learning opportunities were and are ignored, put down, and ridiculed. This is particularly disastrous in the fields of history and literature, fields especially concerned with the deeds and expressions of human beings. If the study of history and literature presumes any effort to understand man, to empathize with the human condition, to obtain a degree of self-understanding, to begin to grasp some of the totality of human living—then to rely exclusively upon the printed or spoken word as the means is optimistic and foolish.

This emphasis on cognitive learning has been the supporting base for much of the encouragement given to inductive teaching, inquiry, and discovery learning—especially in history classes. In part we have seen the transfer of a teaching-learning model from the sciences into other fields. A few years ago we heard a great deal about the new social studies—in the first place little was new—but what the new social studies represent is an over-commitment to the rational. The expectations for inquiry and discovery as teaching-learning strategies were beyond reason.

In pragmatic terms there are only so many kinds or type of history. Everyone is aware of the typical categories applied to history: political history, economic history, social history, cultural history, intellectual history, etc. But let us put those aside for our purpose. Rather let us borrow from the views of Henry Johnson and Charles A. Beard and apply another scheme or frame of reference:

1. History as a reconstruction of a period in the past. Here the effort is to deal with what happened in that past and to identify what was important or significant in the period in its own terms.
2. History as a reconstruction of a period of the past with the principal effort to look to the future. That is, the identification and study of those aspects of that past which shaped the future.
3. History viewed from the present. What happened in the past that is of importance now?

Each of these views of history results in a different kind of history— whether one is writing history, teaching history, or studying history. It is probably impossible to hold all three frames of reference concurrently. Most advocate one over the remaining two.

A second general scheme could be described in the following manner:

1. Whatever happened in the past is history.
2. History is only those points of the past for which we have sources.
3. History is created by the historian; what the historian writes becomes history.

Again one can adopt one or more of these basic "definitions"; the major point is that students encounter little other *written history*. For if what the historian does contribute to the nature of history itself matters, then this aspect of history should be a part of the students' experience.

If students are to *write* history, there are certain required skills: research, analytical, evaluative, and writing skills. Granted, certain aspects require judgment, insight, maturity, and imagination. Most high school students possess a little of each of these characteristics. It is precisely in these areas that history and English teachers have mutual concerns, purposes, and responsibilities.

LANGUAGE AND THE LA MANCHA TEACHER: INITIAL SURVEY

by

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When I began thinking about the teaching of the English language in the schools participating in the La Mancha program, I soon recognized the wisdom in the words of the old Vermonter who—according to Francis Colburn—when asked for directions by a fellow from "down country," replied, "Well, you can't get there from here." I was reminded of the wisdom of his statement when I realized that we were talking about planning language programs—our destination—without really knowing our starting point, our "here." It will certainly be difficult to get to an unknown "there" if we must map a route from an equally unknown "here"; and it was in an attempt to describe our present whereabouts, to describe the state of our present attitudes, concepts, and knowledge concerning language, that I asked English teachers in the La Mancha schools to complete something called *The Language Inquiry*.

The Language Inquiry was developed by ISCPET, an acronym for the Illinois State-Wide Curriculum Study Center in the Preparation of Secondary School English Teachers, a group which has recently released a fine series of studies of various aspects of the teaching of English and the preparation of teachers.[1] *The Language Inquiry* itself, writes Ellen A. Frogner, its originator, is designed "to reflect existing concepts and attitudes toward language"[2]; in other words, this questionnaire will reveal what a given group—in our case, high school English teachers in the La Mancha schools—thinks about a number of aspects of language and its teaching. The first part of *The Language Inquiry* consists of one hundred statements concerning language; to each item one is asked to respond "Agree," "Moderately agree," "No opinion," or "Disagree." Item 1, for example, reads: "Teachers should insist on formal English in the classroom, both in speaking and writing." Responses to this statement will show awareness (or lack of awareness) of functional varieties of English and of the concept of appropriateness, of the necessity of suiting language to situation.

The one hundred items included in *The Language Inquiry* in its present form represent the survivors of a weeding-out process. Initially, ten leading American linguists responded to 150 statements about language; in a second step, the same linguists responded to a revised version containing 135 items; and the present questionnaire is based on these responses. In all but three cases, the statements in the present *Inquiry* represent "items where at least seven out of ten of the linguists concurred."[3] Thus the votes of the linguists, "scholars of the language" as Dr. Frogner calls them, "became the standard against which the votes of the other respondents were to be measured" (p. 6). In effect, the linguists validated the one hundred statements.

The main purpose of the present study in Vermont was to make such a comparison—to compare the responses of Vermont teachers with those of the linguists; but I was also able to compare the Vermont responses with the Illinois responses, which came from three different groups: college students, English teachers who work with student teachers, and recent college graduates. I will look at these comparisons in more detail later, but would note here that Illinois and Vermont teachers share a great many attitudes, more than are shared by the various Illinois groups; teaching English apparently leaves its mark.

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[1] These include: *Responses of Prospective English Teachers to a Test on Theories of Literary Criticism; Master of Arts in the Teaching of English Programs: A Directory; The Competency of Illinois Secondary School English Teachers in Educational Measurement and Evaluation; The Professional Competency of Illinois Secondary School English Teachers; The Teaching of Reading by English Teachers in Public High Schools: A National Survey; Illinois Tests in the Teaching of High School English; A Nation-Wide Survey of the Supervision of English Student Teaching in Colleges and Universities; Advanced Composition in the Preparation of Secondary School English Teachers; Project Grammar: The Linguistic and Language Preparation of Secondary School Teachers of English; A Program of Professional Readings for Secondary School English Teachers; Illinois State-Wide Curriculum Study Center in the Preparation of Secondary School English Teachers: Final Report; American Dialects for English Teachers.* And, of course, *A Study of the Responses to the "Language Inquiry."*

[2] Ellen A. Frogner, *A Study of the Responses to "The Language Inquiry"* (U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare; USOE Project Number HE-45, USOE Contract Number OE-5-10=029, ISCPET Subcontract Number SS-21-12-66), 1969, p. 1.

[3] Frogner, p. 5; the three exceptions are explained on this page.

Table 1 shows the differences at the .01 level of significance between the responses of the linguists, the three Illinois groups, and the Vermont teachers. At this level, where, if chance alone is operating, the chances are 99 in 100 that the differences are true and not attributable to chance, there are 13 differences out of the possible 100 between the responses of the linguists and those of the Vermont teachers. Table 2 shows the differences at the .05 level of significance for the same four groups. At this level, where the chances are 95 in 100 that the differences are not attributable to chance (if chance alone is operating), there are another thirteen items that show a difference between the responses of the linguists and those of the Vermont teachers. Thus in 26 of the 100 items, or—to put it another way—in 26 per cent of the items, the responses of the Vermont teachers differ from those of the linguists at the .01 or .05 level of significance. It is worth noting, too, that four items (7, 14, 60, 89) are significant at the .001 level; that is, there is only one chance in a thousand that these differences are due to chance.

TABLE 1:

DIFFERENCES AT .01 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE BETWEEN RESPONSES OF LINGUISTS AND RESPONSES OF ILLINOIS COLLEGE STUDENTS, COOPERATING TEACHERS, RECENT GRADUATES, AND TEACHERS IN LA MANCHA SCHOOLS*

(Chi Squares)

Language Inquiry Item #	College Students N=597	Cooperating teachers N=202	Recent graduates N=79	Teachers in La Mancha Schools N=67
1	16.72	15.85		
2	16.84			
5	11.59	12.70	15.34	13.36
7	21.78	12.89	15.35	19.05
9	18.14	11.11	13.51	12.94
12	12.08			
14	27.37	21.79	23.96	17.05
17	11.65			
18	15.46	11.43	11.79	12.11
26	10.63			
28	14.81		12.80	
30	11.82			11.70
32	17.72		12.96	
38	21.11	11.62	17.43	10.91
40	14.38	11.75	14.11	9.40
41	16.64	12.84	17.43	11.70
46	13.50			
47	21.90		15.86	
48	12.94		10.68	
53	11.82			
60	20.66	22.51	22.40	23.39
61	12.32			
66	13.12			9.77
72	11.10			
78	16.28	14.48	16.66	10.91
80			11.01	
83	13.78		12.44	
89	18.90	14.51	17.99	14.70

* Adapted from Frogner, p. 16, Table 3.

TABLE 2:

DIFFERENCES AT .05 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE BETWEEN RESPONSES OF LINGUISTS AND RESPONSES OF ILLINOIS COLLEGE STUDENTS, COOPERATING TEACHERS, RECENT GRADUATES, AND TEACHERS IN LA MANCHA SCHOOLS*

(Chi Squares)

Language Inquiry Item #	College Students N=597	Cooperating teachers N=202	Recent graduates N=79	Teachers in La Mancha Schools N=67
1			8.71	8.35
2		7.64	10.03	6.13
6	8.58			
8	8.77			
11	8.13			
12			9.14	8.70
15	7.63			7.04
17		7.45		
23				6.43
27	9.21	7.98		6.13
28		9.52		8.35
29	9.76			
30			7.88	
32				6.13
45			9.58	
46			10.17	
47		7.77		
48		8.18		7.68
53				6.73
54	9.22		10.03	
61		10.18	10.22	8.35
65	8.04			
72			7.48	
80	9.51	7.93		7.68
83		8.61		
83	10.20		8.29	6.13

So far these tables are just that—tables, lists of figures; they need to be analyzed and commented on before they can be meaningful or useful to us. Looking first, then, at Table 1 (differences at the .01 level), one notices immediately the similarity between the columns for the Illinois and the Vermont teachers: they share eleven items, the Illinois column lists one item (Item 1) not included in the Vermont column, and the Vermonters have two differences (Items 30 and 66) not found among Illinois teachers. The Illinois teachers differ from the linguists on twelve items, the Vermont teachers on thirteen; and eleven of these are common to both groups. In fact, Table 1 makes clear that so far as language is concerned, Vermont teachers and Illinois teachers share many of the same attitudes, have many of the same concepts; they are, in fact, more alike than any two of the Illinois groups. One wonders about cause and effect here: are individuals with certain attitudes attracted to teaching, or does the teaching of English induce the attitudes and beliefs? The question is interesting because the items we are looking at represent *divergence* from attitudes held by linguists.

The statements in *The Language Inquiry,* and therefore the differences between the responses of linguists and those of teachers, can be grouped according to subject; and it is interesting to note that to a large extent the significant differences cluster about certain topics. Table 3 lists the eighteen topics or aspects of language covered by *The Language Inquiry* and shows, first, how many of the items relate to that topic and, second, how many statistically significant differences (.01 and .05 levels) were found between the responses of the linguists and those of the Illinois teachers and the Vermont teachers. Once again one is impressed by the agreement among the teachers; they may disagree with the linguists, but they do not disagree with one another. Thus there are seven topics for which neither group has any significant differences (1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 11, 16); there are nine topics for which both groups have one or more signficant differences (4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18). And finally there are two topics (10 and 17) for which only the Vermont teachers, perhaps displaying a bit of traditional New England cantankerousness, have significant differences.

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* Adapted from Frogner, p. 48, Table A.

So far as Vermont teachers are concerned, areas of particular concern are (1) Grammatical forms (grammatical inflections)—6 differences out of a possible 9; (2) Language study and teaching—4 out of 14; (3) Relationship of English to other languages—2 out of 2; (4) Standards in using language—3 out of 13; (5) Vocabulary—5 out of 13. We should also look at the four items that are significant at the .001 level (7, 14, 60, 89), because these reflect particularly widespread misinformation or lack of knowledge. The first of these four, Item 7, reads as follows:

> 7. The speakers of Chinese and English use some of the same methods to signal meaning.

Nine of the linguists agreed with this statement; one had no opinion. In contrast, 42 of the Vermont teachers had no opinion, while 11 agreed,

TABLE 3

TOPICAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES

Topic	Number of items in *Language Inquiry*	Items showing statistically significant differences—Illinois		Items showing statistically significant differences—Vermont	
		No.	Item	No.	Item
1. Attitude toward language	(2)*	(0)		(0)	
2. Composition writing	(3)	(0)		(0)	
3. Development in the use of language	(4)	(0)		(0)	
4. Dialects	(7)	(2)	61, 83	(1)	61
5. Dictionaries	(2)	(0)		(0)	
6. Grammatical forms (grammatical inflection)	(9)	(3)	2, 5, 14	(6)	2, 5, 14, 32, 53, 66
7. History (development of the English language)	(4)	(2)	28, 47	(1)	28
8. Language study and teaching	(14)	(3)	38, 40 89	(4)	12, 38, 40, 89
9. Pronunciation	(2)	(0)		(0)	
10. Punctuation	(2)	(0)		(1)	30
11. Relationship between speaking and writing	(3)	(0)		(0)	
12. Relationship of English to other languages	(2)	(2)	7, 18	(2)	7, 18
13. Spelling	(5)	(1)	9	(1)	9
14. Standards in using language	(13)	(3)	1, 27, 41	(3)	1, 23, 41
15. Structure of sentences (Syntax)	(6)	(1)	78	(1)	78
16. Style	(4)	(0)		(0)	
17. Terminology	(5)	(0)		(1)	94
18. Vocabulary	(13)	(4)	17, 48, 60, 80	(5)	15, 17, 48 60, 80

* Figures in parenthesis refer to the number of items dealing with a given topic. Figures not in parenthesis refer to specific items. Thus for the entry "Attitude toward language," there are two items dealing with the topic in the *Inquiry,* but no responses showed significant differences.

9 moderately agreed, and 5 disagreed. It seems likely that few Vermont teachers know Chinese and therefore many of them felt they had no opinion concerning the statement. But what is involved here is an understanding of the various ways in which languages signal grammatical meaning; it can be argued, indeed, as Dr. Frogner says, that "an understanding of characteristics of the English language as tested in Items 7, 28, 48, and 77 would seem to be essential for all teachers and prospective teachers of English . . ." (p.23). And yet for three of these four items cited as essential by Dr. Frogner (*i.e.,* items 7, 28, and 48) we find significant differences at either the .01 or the .05 level between the responses of the linguists and those of the Vermont teachers.[4]

Continuing with the four items significant at the .001 level, number 14 reads:

14. Even though *It's me* is accepted in informal English, the expression *It is I* is really right.

All ten linguists disagreed; Vermont teachers responded: agree 35, moderately agree 9, no opinion 3, disagree 20. Clearly the teachers were thinking of the Latin-based rule from traditional grammar that states that a form of *to be* must be followed by the nominative case. Just as clearly, this rule no longer reflects actual educated conversational usage in this country[5]; but more importantly, what does it mean to say that a particular form is "really right"? As James Bostain told the Vermont Education Association in 1966, since no one knows how God speaks, there can be no "really right" in this non-Platonic world. And yet apparently 44 out of 67 Vermont teachers feel at least moderately certain that they know what is "really right." Unfortunately it is the attitude expressed in Item 14, as Dr. Frogner points out, that "may account for the slow acceptance of a realistic approach to some of the details concerning language" (p. 20).

Item 60 is similar to Item 14 in that both require a judgment about acceptability. It reads:

60. The following sentence represents standard English usage: *A financial arrangement was worked out between the chorus, band, and orchestra.*

All the linguists agreed with the statement; 41 Vermont teachers disagreed, 7 had no opinion, 7 moderately agreed, and 12 agreed. Again we see a sharp division between the opinions of the linguists and the opinions of the teachers. The latter group clearly responded to the often cited—and often violated—rule limiting *between* to reference to two things rather than to the usage actually widely prevalent among educated Americans.[6]

We find a different situation with Item 89, the last of this group of four. Here the difficulty seems to be in the terminology. The item reads:

89. Finding the elements of which a sentence is composed—primary, secondary, and tertiary —is a method that has appeared within the last decade.

While 8 of the linguists disagreed and 1 had no opinion (1 did not respond), 48 of the Vermont teachers had no opinion, 6 agreed, 3 moderately agreed, and 10 disagreed. Although the terminology as used here may seem specialized, the words have their usual meaning; and, Dr. Frogner accurately points out, "The basic principle in understanding the structure of a sentence is here, and it is a principle that has been used for a long time. A respondent might very well have seen this in the statement without knowing about the particular work of Jespersen" (p. 22).

Tunring now to the five (of eighteen) subject areas of *The Language Inquiry* that show a high proportion of significant differences between the responses of the linguists and those of the Vermont teachers, we find the items from each category, and the responses, listed in Table 4.

The first group deals with grammatical forms, and it is clear that in general the teachers are more traditional, or conservative, or rule-bound (your choice of adjectival will classify you) than the linguists. In Item 2, 17 of the teachers would "correct" *Drive Slow* by changing it to *Drive Slowly.* They recognize that the majority of adverbs in Modern English end in *-ly,* but they apparently are unaware of the long and perfectly respectable history—going back to Old English and continuing to the present—of the so-called flat adverbs. Would they, one wonders, "correct" such expressions as *fly high, go fast, sure enough,* or *think hard*?[7]

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[4] Item 77 has a chi square value of 4.02; a value of 4.60 is significant at the .10 level.

[5] For a discussion of this construction and its use, see Margaret M. Bryant, *Current American Usage* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, Inc., 1962), pp. 120-121.

[6] See Bryant, pp. 38-40.

[7] These examples come from Stuart Robertson, *The Development of Modern English,* rev. by Frederic S. Cassidy, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954), p. 315. Of the *go slow—go slowly* problem Robertson and Cassidy write: ". . . though in *go slow* we have a true adverb, people often mistake it for the adjective *slow,* and insist on the form *slowly.* In this particular case, considerable opposition to the shorter form has arisen, though to any sound ear it is far more suggestive of a warning than *go slowly*" (p. 315). See also Bryant, pp. 189-190.

TABLE 4

ITEMS (GROUPED BY TOPICS) WHICH SHOW A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE AT THE .01 OR .05 LEVEL BETWEEN RESPONSES OF LINGUISTS AND THOSE OF VERMONT TEACHERS

	Agree	Moderately agree	No opinion	Disagree
Grammatical forms (grammatical inflection):				
2. The signs saying *Drive Slow* should be corrected to read *Drive Slowly*.				
Linguists	0	0	0	10
Vermont teachers	11	6	11	39
5. A college student made the following comment to his friend: *If the time was longer between quarters, I'd go down to Florida or somewhere.* He should have used *were* instead of *was* in the *if* clause.				
Linguists	0	2	0	8
Vermont teachers	30	13	10	14
14. (discussed above)				
32. The English language is limited mainly to *shall* and *will* for expressing future time.				
Linguists	0	0	0	10
Vermont teachers	12	9	7	39
53. The rule *Two or more singular subjects connected by "and" require a plural verb* does not always apply in standard English.				
Linguists	8	1	0	1
Vermont teachers	28	3	16	20
66. Splitting the infinitive may sometimes enable the writer to express his ideas with greater clarity and force than otherwise.				
Linguists	10	0	0	0
Vermont teachers	32	17	9	9
Language study and teaching				
12. It is only within the the last ten years that there has been any questioning of the classifications found in traditional grammar.				
Linguists	0	0	0	10
Vermont teachers	6	7	21	33
38. Drill in conjugating English verbs is of little consequence to the native speaker.				
Linguists	10	0	0	00
Vermont teachers	30	10	12	15
40. Whoever learns a language learns an alphabet.				
Linguists	0	0	0	10
Vermont teachers	11	9	15	32
89. (Discussed above)				
Relationship of English to other languages				
7. (Discussed above)				

	Agree	Moderately agree	No opinion	Disagree
18. The structure of German is more like that of English than the structure of Latin is.				
Linguists	9	0	0	1
Vermont teachers	21	10	23	13
Standards in using language				
1. Teachers should insist on formal English in the classroom, both in speaking and writing.				
Linguists	0	0	0	10
Vermont teachers	4	26	3	34
23. As soon as we take present-day usage for a guide in determining what is acceptable English, we break down all standards.				
Linguists	0	0	0	10
Vermont teachers	3	16	9	39
Vocabulary				
15. The use of words like *terrific* and *O.K.* for approval is sometimes in good taste.				
Linguists	10	0	0	0
Vermont teachers	37	23	5	2
17. A redundant expression cannot be standard usage.				
Linguists	0	0	0	10
Vermont teachers	15	11	3	38
48. A college senior made the statement: "I am going to student-teach next quarter." The expression *to student-teach* represents a process made use of mainly in college campus English.				
Linguists	1	0	1	8
Vermont teachers	19	8	18	22
60. (Discussed above)				
80. A child who asks permission by saying *Can I go too?* should not have his English corrected by being told to say *May I go too?*				
Linguists	7	2	1	0
Vermont teachers	16	19	11	21

In item 5, the teachers feel strongly that the subjunctive should be used, even though the situation presented is informal. The linguists, in contrast, apparently responded on the basis of the informality of the situation and the fact that the subjunctive mood seems to be disappearing from Modern English (except in such formulaic expressions as "Be it resolved . . .").

In considering item 32, one is tempted to conclude that too many of the teachers didn't stop to think. Certainly they know, as native speakers, that "He arrives tomorrow" and "He plans to go to Europe next summer" both express future time, and that we are not restricted to only *shall* and *will* to express future time.

For items 53 and 66, the linguists' responses again reflect actual usage, and those of the teachers traditional rules, although the teachers are a good deal more willing to permit an infinitive to be split (item 66) than they are to let a singular verb be used with a compound subject (item 53). They should know, however, that studies of actual usage show that in some circumstances both constructions may be acceptable. Of the split infinitive, Bryant writes: "Whether to avoid or to use this construction is a matter of style" (p. 194); of one possibility for item 53 she concludes: "Standard English sources favor *there is* by an overwhelming proportion when there is a compound subject, the first member of which is singular" (p. 13). I conclude that many teachers are still wedded to what James Bostain calls "Other World English, a Utopian notion of what English might be." He adds that although we can make maps of this imaginary country— *i.e.,* our prescriptive English texts—to sell such maps to travellers is irresponsible.[8]

The responses of the Vermont teachers to Item 12 show that over half do not realize that "questioning of the classifications found in traditional grammar" has been going on at least since the 1920's and 1930's; too many feel that this is a new (and hopefully short-lived?) phenomenon.

The responses of the teachers to Item 38 show that just under half need more information about language learning, about just what aspects of his language are controlled by the child entering school, and also that this group seems remarkably unaware that most English verbs have only four different forms and two tense inflections (present and past). Drill on highly inflected verbs of a foreign language makes sense—*amo, amas, amat, amamus, amatis, amant*—but drill on lightly inflected verbs in the native language does not —*I love, you love, he* (*she, it*) *loves, we love, you love, they love.* Perhaps the teachers were thinking of the weak or irregular verbs, like *drink, steal, rise,* and *fly.* If so, it is certainly true that some drill is often necessary; but in general, the linguists' unanimous agreement with Item 38 seems reasonable.

The thirty-five teachers who agreed with or had no opinion about Item 40, "Whoever learns a language learns an alphabet," exemplify the often found tendency to equate "language" with "writing." Actually, of course, men had been speaking languages for about 500,000 years before any alphabet was developed, and even today there are some languages that have no writing system. Thus it is perfectly possible to learn a language— to learn to speak and understand it—without learning an alphabet. Our writing system, after all, is a subsystem of our language that is in some ways parallel to speech; our writing system is not, however, our language.

The fact that over half the teachers did not recognize the accuracy of Item 18 indicates to me that the colleges should do more to equip teachers with knowledge of the history of English. The ISCPET recommendations in this area are that "Each college or university engaged in preparing secondary school teachers of English should . . . attempt to prepare teachers who have attained at least the 'good' level." For knowledge of language, the "good" level includes:

> A knowledge of the history of the English language, with appropriate awareness of its phonological, morphological, and syntactic changes.[9]

I could comment on each of the remaining items separately, but I think the general trend is already clear to you: with many teachers we find lack of information, or misinformation, or failure to observe the actual practice of educated Americans, or prescriptive attitudes. Perhaps Item 48 in this last group does deserve special comment. *To student-teach* exemplifies one of the processes of word formation in English; it is a process used widely and certainly not restricted to college campuses. We have, for example, *to baby sit,* or *to type set,*[10] or *to proof read.* Aside from its notorious borrowing, English has many ways of adding to its vocabulary, many processes of word formation. We should know about them and make our students aware of the tremendous vitality of the language. I cannot believe that a significant number of teachers share the attitude expressed on one of *The Language Inquiry* forms returned to me—I will quote without comment. The statement appeared in lieu of an answer to Part II. "Language per se does not interest me— in writing, in literature, yes—but alone, no."

Having mentioned Part II, I would like to look briefly at the responses it elicited. This part of *The Language Inquiry* asked each respondent to indicate the three statements in Part I that he would most like to hear discussed and to indicate the reasons for his choice. Not all respondents completed Part II: 26 completely omitted it, but 35 did list the three statements they would choose to hear discussed. The five statements most frequently selected are:[11]

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[8] Remarks made in a speech to the Vermont Education Association, October 14, 1966.

[9] J. N. Hook, Paul H. Jacobs, Raymond D. Crisp, *Illinois State-Wide Curriculum Study Center in the Preparation of Secondary School English Teachers* (U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; USOE Project Number HE-145; USOE contract Number OE-5-10-029), 1969, p. 157.

[10] But see John Algeo and Thomas Pyles, *Problems in the Origins and Development of the English Language* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1966), p. 229.

[11] Only the top five choices are listed because a clear division appeared at this point.

22. The child's development in the use of language during the pre-school years provides clues for methods to be used in the English classroom.
55. Twentieth-century standards of scholarship in dictionary compiling and editing are low as compared with those of the eighteenth century.
89. Finding the elements of which a sentence is composed—primary, secondary, and tertiary—is a method that has appeared within the last decade.
29. The English language is more a product of historical accident than it is of the efforts of the grammarians, lexicographers, or critics who have wanted to shape it.
79. We should have an American Academy to regulate our language.

The most intriguing aspect of this list is that for four of the five items chosen there was *no* significant difference between the responses of the linguists and those of the Vermont teachers, even though the reason for the choice that was most frequently checked was, "I need more background information about the topic or idea represented in the statement."[12] In other words, teachers did *not* select items about which they are demonstrably un- or mis- informed. Also interesting is that this same kind of choice was made by the Illinois teachers. Dr. Frogner sums up her discussion by saying:

> An observation of the data for items frequently selected for discussion [in Part II] shows an absence of many items where there is a statistically significant difference between responses of the linguists and responses of the three groups . . . . The results suggest a lack of awareness on the part of many respondents (not all) as to the possibility of any other answer than theirs, and theirs might easily be the conventional, prescriptive, often unrealistic answer. (p. 45)

Looking back over the many figures and tables and charts and qustionnaires, one asks finally what general conclusions can be drawn; what have we learned? We've learned, I think, that the situation here in Vermont is very much like that in Illinois; we have a long way to go before we can meet the guidelines for the preparation of teachers of English set forth in 1967 by the National Council of Teachers of English, the Modern Language Association, and the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification. Harold B. Allen summarizes the knowledge about language that all English teachers should have as follows:

> 1) some understanding of phonology, morphology, and syntax; the sources and development of the English vocabulary; semantics; and social, regional, and functional varieties of English usage; 2) acquaintance with methods of preparation and uses of dictionaries and grammars; 3) good grounding in one grammatical system and a working acquaintance with at least one other system; 4) sufficient knowledge of the basic principles of language learning for application at various levels to the problems of those learning to communicate with a variety of audiences; 5) an understanding of the respective domains of linguistics and rhetoric and of the range of choice available within the structure of the language.[13]

Many individual teachers probably do have this knowledge, but the present survey has demonstrated that many do not. It has also convinced me that those teachers and administrators who argue against change, who want to maintain the status quo, are to some extent at least, arguing for the perpetuation of error and ignorance. And surely this is not what we want in the La Mancha program.

What have we learned from *The Language Inquiry?* Well, we now have a much better idea than before of what we do not know; and with this information about our present whereabouts, we ought to be able realistically to plan our future course. Perhaps the old Vermonter was right and you *can't* get there from here, but you will certainly have a better chance if you know exactly where "here" is—especially if your goal is "an unreachable star."[14]

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[12] The one exception is Item 89 which is significant at the .01 level.

[13] Harold B. Allen, "The Language Component," *Language and Teaching: Essays in Honor of W. Wilbur Hatfield* (Chicago State Collge, 1969), p. 43.

[14] Tables 1 and 2 and the items from *The Language Inquiry* are reprinted with the permission of the Board of Directors of *The Language Inquiry,* copyright 1969 by Ellen A. Frogner.

A DIFFERENT DRUMMER: WRITING IN A NONGRADED ELECTIVE ENGLISH PROGRAM

by

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> "The way the world is now," Levin said in Malamud's *A New Life,* "I sometimes feel I'm engaged in a great irrelevancy, teaching people how to write who don't know what to write. I can give them subjects but not subject matter. I worry I'm not teaching how to keep civilization from destroying itself . . . . I have the strongest compulsion to be involved with such thoughts in the classroom, if you know what I mean."
>
> "I do," said Bucket, "but if we all did that who'd be teaching composition?"[1]

Levin's dilemma and Bucket's question clearly *cause "the mass of [English teachers to] lead* lives of quiet desperation." Composition is the one component of English that we cannot escape. We do not know, at least with certainty, what to do with it, nor do we believe we can get along without it. Hundreds of books and articles have been written, aech offering its own solution to a problem that haunts every conscientious English teacher. What is the best way to teach writing? Is there a best method? Or are "We all educated to be sons of Tell . . . and keep on our own track"?[2]

Obviously, I have no easy enswer, no simple soultions, only the consolation that "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer."[3] Backgrounds and methods of each English teacher are so different that we can only be grateful that the La Mancha Program leaves us free to step to the cadence of a different drummer as long as we reach the same end—that seemingly "unreachable star"—effective communication.

At Burlington High School we have chosen a nongraded elective system as the framework within which we can best teach communication. *Ideally,* within such a famework students will select courses over a period of three years that will provide a balance of emphasis on language as it enables people to conceptualize and organize their experiences, and on literature as it provides enrichment through the creative experience of others. *Realistically,* this is a framework within which those students unable to make viable choices and assume the responsibility for such choices will be exposed to at least one semester of Craft of Communication or one semester of Craft of Writing. Their choice will depend upon their achievement level when they come to the high school. This conflict between the ideal and the real is always present, regardless of many statements to the contrary.

At Burlington High School we do not pretend in less than a year to *have* a nongraded English program; rather we are working *toward* such a program. Like Thoreau, we believe that "If [we] have built castles in the air, [our] work need not be lost, that is where they should be. Now [we must] put foundations under them."[4] As we near the end of our first year's experience in coping with the realities of students' aspirations versus their needs, we know we have yet to build a stronger foundation of concepts, skills, and understandings attainable by each individual. This is necessary to ensure every student the opportunity to refine the basic skills of communication and to enable him to move from phase to phase as he achieves the objectives of a specific course. For that is the primary premise upon which a nongraded program operates if it meets the needs of the student and allows him to progress according to his individual achievement.

For too long emphasis in teaching English has been not on the "maximum progress of the individual student," an expression used by Allan Glatthorn, but on what each individual English teacher teaches. Our curriculum objectives are vague, if stated at all, and we expect all students to move through our curriculum, whatever it is, at the same pace. We know, too, that any English program is as good as the individual teachers. A student is indeed fortunate if he gets the best teachers and most unfortunate is he has that teacher who puts in time for the paycheck at the end of the month, concerned neither with the individual student nor with improving method or curriculum. Classroom supervision over a period of years convinces me that most of us consider literature the very heart of our English program, probably because literature is what *we* have studied most. Despite our obvious commitment to literature, as English teachers we have reached no clear concensus about the objectives of the literature component of our curriculum. Is literature a separate component, or is it, in the early stages of studying it, part of a single process—communication—creation and appreciation, all of which involve language in its many ramifications from simple word meanings and semantics to style in writing and in reading literature?

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[1] Bernard Malamud, *A New Life* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1970), p. 109.

[2] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1951), p. 135.

[3] Thoreau, p. 347.

[4] Thoreau, p. 345.

Our *first* obligation as teachers of English is to see our discipline, not as a content subject like social studies or biology, but rather, as James Moffett calls it, "a symbol system."[5] Like mathematics and foreign languages, English is not about anything. "When a student 'learns' one of these systems, he *learns how* to operate it."[6] Helping students translate experience into words, oral then written, is the basic task of the English teacher. It is, as I see it, the *process* of teaching communication. Can teaching the process of composing be done in the traditional graded situation? For some, yes, but not for all. To teach young people how to operate their language requires imagination, skill, patience, and hard work —not, unfortunately, trademarks of every English teacher.

Better utilization of staff, then, is only one of the ways in which the nongraded elective system enables us to increase the effectiveness of our English program. Such a structure also improves the program (1) by giving more choice to the student without his losing the substance of the traditional three-year program; (2) by making provision for the teaching of basic skills to those students deficient in such skills; (3) by eliminating the needless repetition of skills and content already learned; (4) by placing the responsibility for learning on the student rather than on the teacher; (5) by designing courses with specifically stated behavioral goals or learning objectives; and (6) by providing time for and emphasis on teaching the process of composition.

Last year we experimented with senior electives, which we developed as a result of suggestions from students in our school. From this experiment we learned that interest in English increased as students had more choice in the courses they would take. This year we abolished the distinction among tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades, with all the cut and dried content these grade designations imply. To replace the traditional Adventures in Literature, American Literature, and British Literature, with language and composition thrown in as fillers, we designed twenty-one different semester courses. Many of these courses we offer at more than one of five levels or phases.

In selecting courses, the student is guided by the phase designation. If he has serious difficulty reading, writing, speaking, or thinking, he should elect Phase 1 courses. If, on the other hand, he has excellent command of basic skills and is seeking more challenging academic experience, he elects Phase 4 or 5 courses.

"Phasing," as we have borrowed the term from Frank Brown, Apex, and others, is merely a means of classifying courses according to the difficulty and complexity of the skills and materials of the particular course. Students would, we hoped, elect courses according to their individual needs, especially in the first and second semesters in the high school. As we built our "castles in the air," we believed our students would save some of the more specialized courses, such as Shakespeare and Creative Writing, until they had mastered the basic skills of reading and writing.

In our first year all courses were open to all students, grades ten through twelve. Our expectations were high. We had a vision of the ideal program and believed, like all visionaries, that the world, in our case the students, would conform to our dream. Like John Holt (*The Underachieving School*), we believed "every child should be the planner, director, and assessor of his own education." We *encouraged* students to take at least one basic course in writing and one basic course in literature. Encouragement, we find, is not always enough. The student who cannot read well avoids the literature courses; the student who cannot write prefers to take only literature courses. One student, as an example, wrote on her sign-up sheet, "I don't need any more *writting*." We still "hold fast to the dream," but our first year's experience indicates that not all students are ready to select courses to meet their needs and abilities and to build the kind of sequence that will develop skills and understandings. Consequently, next year, as one step toward putting foundations under our castles in the air, we are removing the tenth graders from the nongraded program and will ask these students to take one semester of writing—Craft of Communication or Craft of Writing—and one semester of Speech-Drama. This regression on our part still allows the student some choice. Tenth graders who wish to take more than one English may elect a literature course, Semantics, or Film as an Art Form. We will make exceptions for the very able ninth grader whose teacher and counselor recommend that the tenth grade requirements be waived. (We now have a ninth grade student enrolled in one of our most challenging elective courses. His ability and maturity enable him to compete easily with the best of the eleventh and twelfth graders.)

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[5] James Moffett, *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), p. 6.

[6] Moffett, p. 6.

Other limitations placed upon the students are those of scheduling, staffing, and money. In some cases a student cannot be scheduled into the course of his choice because of the complexity of scheduling in a comprehensive high school. Nor is it possible from an administrative point of view to staff every course at every level a student might choose.

In spite of such limitations and some frustrations in placing students, we plan next year to offer thirty semester courses. For each course (1) we must write a course description which appears in *Opportunities in Education,* a booklet prepared by the school to help students make course selections, and (2) we must write course designs for every course offered. The course design is primarily for teacher use but may be made available to students. A typical course design states the name of the course, the level or phase, the objectives, the concepts to be taught, the books to be used, supplementary materials, approaches deemed most suitable, and methods of evaluation.

Most essential to the success of our particular program is the careful statement of objectives for each course at each phase. In spite of controversy over behavioral objectives or the systems approach to learning, especially as they apply to English, learning objectives are necessary to provide purpose and continuity and to avoid one of the major weaknesses of the traditional program —needless repetition. Ed Cohen expresses the need for objectives well in the title to an article in the March *Media and Methods:* "If you're not sure where you're going, you're liable to end up someplace else."

Our purpose, then, was—and is—to define what we believe to be valid educational objectives for the teaching of English, to design courses aimed at achieving these objectives, to isolate concepts that contribute most toward achieving our objectives, and to formulate as specifically as we can those approaches that will help the students, not only in acquiring knowledge, but—and this is most important—in making the knowledge more meaningful through what Bloom has labeled comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Each of these steps in Bloom's progression should be considered in writing concepts for a specific course. Behavioral objectives force us to be conscious of changes we are effecting in pupil behavior. "What can the learner do as a result of instruction that he could not do before?"[7] "How do a student's feeling and thinking change as a result of instruction?"[8] Objectives, therefore, are never static but are constantly subject to review and revision, just as the teacher's methods and materials are subject to evaluation.

Let me illustrate course design and possibilities for revision with a typical design used at Burlington High School this year. Craft of Writing at Phase 3 level was designed by Mrs. Marian Gleason and her committee. (I might add that course designs are effective only if written by the teachers who use them.) I choose a writing course for two reasons: (1) The improvement of writing is the purpose of the La Mancha Program and of this conference; (2) we believe we have had the greatest measurable success with our writing courses in the nongraded program. Teachers admit that the teaching of composition is hard work, but they also admit that student writing has improved noticeably since we set up semester courses devoted just to the teaching of writing. We now offer Craft of Writing at four levels, Phases 2-5, Advanced Composition at Phase 4 and 5, and Creative Writing at Phase 4 and 5. We also teach three sections of Semantics, or more accurately Language and Human Behavior, a course so closely related to the teaching of writing that we may incorporate it at some time as part of the writing course. Film as an Art Form is also a course that, in spite of some opinion to the contrary, lends itself especially to teaching writing—a relationship clearly shown in the excellent article in the February NEATE *Leaflet*, written by Mary Joslyn and Marian Gleason.

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[7] Ed Cohen, "If You're Not Sure Where You're Going, You're Liable to End Up Someplace Else," *Media and Methods,* VI, 7 (March 1970), p. 39.

[8] Cohen, p. 41.

This is the design for teaching writing to students with average command of basic language skills which we are following this year. Written under the pressure of time, this design is admittedly only a beginning. As we evaluate and revise the Craft of Writing courses at all levels, I would like to see teachers place greater emphasis on building students' background for writing. Most high school students have not lived long enough nor read widely enough to have a basis on which to build good composition. Long ago Coleridge said, "I cannot write without a body of thought."

Perhaps for a while we, as teachers of English, must grant students freedom from correctness so that they will feel free to share their thoughts and experiences with us. I am reminded here of the beautiful lines from Saint Exupéry's *The Wisdom of the Sand:*

> Therefore, I summoned the teachers before me and I said to them: "It is not your task to kill the man in the children of men, nor to change them into ants trained to the life of the anthill . . . You shall not fill them with hollow formulas but with visions that are the portals of creative action."

"Hollow formulas" are easy to teach. Awakening the imagination of a teenager long silenced by the rote of grammar exercises and vocabulary drills is hard work.

We could learn much from the way composition is taught in Great Britain. From all that has been written about British education, we learn that they no longer "fill [their] students with hollow formulas." Emphasis there is placed on imaginative writing rather than on expository writing. British teachers seem to be demonstrating that writing can be fun; their students, from reports of observers of the British system, "write with a zest, enthusiasm, and freshness that many Americans would envy." Speech and writing seem to be closely related. Much talk precedes all writing. Robert Hogan, commenting on his observation of the teaching of English in Great Britain, told me recently that teachers in England spend little time correcting papers, but they work very hard geting students ready to write. A teacher there, he says, may spend as much as a week getting his students ready to write one composition.

Speech or talk, then, must precede writing. For this reason we are requiring students new to our school to take one semester of Speech-Drama. Such a course will not be the traditional public speaking course. We will use the guidelines outlined in James Moffett's *The Universe of Discourse* and more specifically in his *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13*. "Rendering experience into words is the real business of schools," Moffet writes. He begins with what he calls "acting out" of experience either by "expressing oneself"—inventing one's own drama or by "filling out" a ready made story. Many of the dramatic activities he suggests for Stage I can be applied at any level with some modification—small group interaction, pantomime, improvisation, unstructured discussion, structured discussion. It is reasonable, I believe, to arrange learning activities to follow man's communication progressions from talk to and about one's self (soliloquy), to talk with others in a dialogue situation, to talk directed to an audience, large or small—the monologue. The Moffet series of writing assignments divides itself quite easily into these areas. Students' papers become the models for discussion rather than models written by professional writers. For more advanced students, however, Moffet has edited a paperback anthology of short stories entitled *Points of View*, which follows his speech-writing progression from the interior monologue (Dorothy Parker's "But the One on the Right") to anonymous narration—no character point of view ("The Lottery" or "The Minister's Black Veil"). Such dramatic activities enable students to sharpen their perceptions, to recall with greater clarity scenes and experiences, to engage in imaginative projection, and to learn to enjoy playing with words and ideas which will, in turn, be translated into more imaginative and finally more accurate composing, both oral and written.

Time does not permit further discussion of the part semantics plays in learning the process of writing. We already have some evidence that students who have had a course in semantics are more discerning listeners, readers, and writers. This in itself is important.

In a nongraded elective program we are able, then, to consider three possibilities all related to teaching and learning the art of composing. Are we fragmenting, or are we synthesizing? Only time and much more effort on our part can tell. It is not easy to march to the music of our drummer. We can only hope, in terms of Thoreau's metaphor, that our shift from a traditional structure can be a process of steady and confident growth spread over a period of years. "Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed and in such desperate enterprises?" Let us step to the music which our students hear and which we hear and "we will not," we feel confident, "be shipwrecked on a vain reality."

APPENDIX: ENGLISH COURSES AT BHS

The Department of English will continue the nongraded elective program at the 11th and 12th grade levels for the year 1970-1971. To ensure all students the opportunity to refine the basic skills of communication—speaking, reading, and writing, the department offers a special program for 10th graders. These students will elect, according to need, from a more limited selection of courses. Each course has a phase designation 1-5. Phasing is merely a means of classifying courses according to the difficulty and complexity of the skills and materials of a particular course. In selecting courses, consider the following definitions:

Phase 1—These courses are designed for students who find reading, writing, speaking, and thinking quite difficult and have serious problems with basic skills.

Phase 2—These courses are created for students who do not have serious difficulties with basic skills but need to improve and refine them and can do best by learning at a somewhat slower pace.

Phase 3—These courses are particularly for those who have an average command of the basic language skills and would like to advance beyond these basic skills but do so at a moderate rather than an accelerated pace.

Phase 4—These courses are for students who learn fairly rapidly and have a good command of the basic language skills.

Phase 5—These courses offer a challenge to students who have excellent control of basic skills and who are looking for more stimulating academic learning experiences.

All students must take a basic course in writing (Craft of Communication or Craft of Writing) and a semester of Speech-Drama before they may elect courses from the Nongraded Elective Program.
All courses except Craft of Communication and American Studies are one semester courses.
Students should maintain a balance between literature courses and writing and language courses. This is important to the success of the student in a program where he is increasingly responsible for his own selection of courses.

GRADE 10 COURSES

101 *Craft of Communication* (Phase 1)
Craft of Communication is designed to help students understand why human beings need to communicate and how language, through the various media, is used to appeal to and fulfill basic needs. They will learn how to view and evaluate television programs and feature films, how to listen to and evaluate aural communications, how to speak well and evaluate what they say, and how to read more skillfully and evaluate what they read. Emphasis will be placed on individual interests and needs. Credit: ½

102– *Basic Reading Skills* (Phases 1,2)
103 Basic Reading Skills is designed to help students read with less difficulty. Emphasis will be on building vocabulary skills and developing reading ability, on improving speed and understanding. This course will also emphasize listening and studying skills. Credit: ½

104– *Man in Modern Society* (Phases 1,2,3)
105– Man in Modern Society is a course which ex-
106 plores modern social problems and values while helping the student on an individual basis to improve skills in reading, writing, speaking, thinking, and listening. The course will be built around such units as "Man's Search for Self," "Man's Knowing Other Men," "Man's Efforts to Communicate," and "Man's Efforts to Build a Better World." Credit: ½

107– *Speech-Drama* (Phases 3,4,5)
108– In this companion course to Craft of Writing,
109 drama will serve as the primary literary form to tie in with Moffett's emphasis upon drama in its relation to speech and thus to writing or composing. The course is also designed to help students gain self-confidence and poise while developing oral communication skills. The students will be encouraged to develop their own thoughts, feelings, and personal attitudes into an effective message for specific situations.
Credit: ½

110– *Man in Conflict* (Phases 4,5)
111 This course will emphasize literary works that deal with man in conflict with himself, with his society, and with the values of his society. Using this thematic framework, students will become involved in a variety of multi-media-oriented activities that will dramatize the conflict of man and how he has attempted to confront and come to terms with them.
Credit: ½

112– *Craft of Writing* (Phases 3,4,5)
113 The Craft of Writing is an introduction to and prerequisite for advanced writing courses. In it the elements of writing are defined; initial assignments in both expository and creative writing are done. Language study essential to success in more advanced writing courses will also be a part of this course. Credit: ½

ELECTIVE COURSES: GRADES 11 & 12

114– *American Studies I and II* (Phase 1)
115 American Studies is a two-year course concentrating on the concepts basic to the American Heritage. These concepts are studied in both their historical and literary contexts. The classes offer a practical approach to the understanding of American life—past and present.

Credit: ½

116– *The Media of Communication* (Phases 2,3)
117 The Media of Communication offers the student an opportunity to study the technical aspects of the mass media, various uses of the film in particular. The class differs primarily from the usual English class in that its students "write" essays, short stories, etc., with film rather than with pencil and paper. A class such as this is a must for those interested in radio or television craft as a career.

Credit: ½

118– *Technical English* (Phases 2,3,4)
119– Technical English is designed primarily for the
120 girl who needs to brush up on business English, to speed up her reading, and to speak up in public. The course is important for any girl who plans to become a secretary or clerk or for any boy interested in printing as a career.

Credit: ½

121– *Language and Human Behavior* (*Semantics*)
122 (Phases 4,5)
Semantics is a word for a course about words or, more specifically, about language and how language affects human behavior. The course deals with the use of words in today's world and concentrates on the language of the business world, the entertainment world, and the world of politics. This is no mere vocabulary study. It is, instead, a survey of the manipulation of words for profit, for pleasure, for pressure and prestige—an excellent course to take with a writing course. Credit: ½

123– *Journalism* (Phases 3,4)
124 The Journalism course stresses learning by doing. The school newspaper will be published by members of the class. Both the editorial and business aspects of journalism will be studied, and class interests should range from printing to publishing. Credit: ½

125– *Exploring Life Through Literature*
126 (Phases 2,3)
This is a basic literature course designed for students who wish to increase their interest in reading as well as to develop skill in analyzing the elements of an effectively constructed story. Emphasis in the course will be on themes in literature that help the student understand better the world in which he lives. He will learn about life as he reads about characters experiencing various aspects of modern life.

Credit: ½

127– *Modern Literature* (Phases 4,5)
128 This basic literature course is designed to improve the student's ability to understand and enjoy modern literature and at the same time to make him more aware of man's conflict with himself and others in modern society. The course will help the student acquire a foundation for understanding literature of all kinds.

Credit: ½

129– *The Hero in Literature* (Phases 4,5)
130 The Hero in Literature is a course designed to show that the lonely, misunderstood hero of today's best seller can trace his isolation, his frustration, and his courage to such heroes as Oedipus, Gawain, and other literary giants of all cultures. Only through reading about heroes throughout the ages can the student truly understand the concept of the hero.

Credit: ½

131– *Unfreed Man* (Phases 3,4)
132 The course Unfreed Man concerns any man or group of men chained by circumstance of race, religion, or inability to adjust socially. *When the Legends Die, Raisin in the Sun, The Outnumbered, We Too Belong,* are examples of the type of book to be studied in this course.

Credit: ½

133– *The Film as an Art Form* (Phases 3,4,5)
134 The Film as an Art Form is designed to give the student background in the development of the film as a distinctive art form and to establish standards for the criticism of films. Students will study the film as language, the film as literature, and the film as history. At the same time they will create, shoot, and edit their own films while learning the tools of filmmaking. Credit: ½

135– *Creative Writing* (Phases 4,5)
136 An exploration of the creative uses of language in poetry and shorter forms of prose. When relevant, the forms, styles, and techniques of established writers are examined as models. The course attempts to encourage the student writer's individual preferences and skills, while developing a recognition of the writer's craft. Readings and revisions of selected manuscripts in class aim to develop sound critical attitudes and good taste. Remedial work in writing is *not* a part of the course. Credit: ½

137– *Advanced Composition* (Phases 4,5)
138 This course is designed for college-bound students concerned with effective expression of ideas and wishing further practice in various forms of advanced composition. Credit: ½

139– *Shakespeare* (Phases, 4,5)
140 This course will include the study of selected works of Shakespeare. The choice of plays to be studied will, when possible, include one comedy, one tragedy and one historical play. Suitable readings, films, and guest speakers will be included to make the study as vital as possible. Credit: ½

141 *Poetry Seminar* (Phase 5)
Explorations leading to an understanding and enjoyment of the poetry of our time. Students admitted on a selection basis. Credit: ½

142– *Rebel in American Literature* (Phases 4,5)
143 This course will examine the tradition of rebellion as it has appeared in the novels of major American writers. The great literary rebels of all periods will be considered, but the major emphasis will be placed on the varied faces of rebellion during the last two decades. Among the novels to be studied will be representative works by Fitzgerald, Cooper, James, Hemingway, Malamud, Faulkner, Melville, Bellow, and Ellison. Credit: ½

144 *Man in the Twentieth Century I* (Phase 5)
This course in the humanities for college-bound students combines literature, history, philosophy, art and music in an effort to examine contemporary man's search for identity. Representative works are *The Stranger, Death of a Salesman,* and *Darkness at Noon.* This is a one semester course. Students may elect Man in Twentieth Century II without having had Man in Twentieth Century I. Credit: ½

145 *Man in the Twentieth Century II* (Phase 5)
This course is designed for those students who wish further study of man's dilemma in the twentieth century. Credit: ½

146 *Great Ideas in Western Thought* (Phase 5)
The "search for self" aspects of the humanities will continue in this second semester's course through a study of the great ideas and cultural achievements of Western Civilization. The main themes deal with the private man, the public man, and the social man. Selections will be drawn from the works of the great philosophers, dramatists, and novelists who have been concerned with man's relationship to man. Through a consideration of man's works of the past in the light of the present, the student may gain insights and understandings which will ultimately bring him to a logical establishment or re-examination of his set of values. Credit: ½

147– *Drama as an Art Form* (Phases 4,5)
148 This course will involve a study of drama as an art form, and a study of the history of the theater as the theater has reflected the society which has produced it. It will include a study of acting theories and techniques and an acting workshop. Credit: ½

149– *The Development of Modern American Drama*
150 (Phases 4,5)
The purpose of this course is to examine the American stage from the time of O'Neill to the present. It will attempt to determine where American Drama is going on the basis of where it has been. This progress will be studied through representative plays and writers of the various periods. Methods of production, dramatist's craft, change in approaches will all be considered as well as the usual study of characters, plots, and settings. Credit: ½

151– *Afro-American Literature* (Phases 4,5)
152 Afro-American Literature is an examination and study of the Afro-American writer's literary achievement through his artistic recreation of the "Black Experience" in fiction, autobiography, biography, poetry, and drama. The focus of this course will be on understanding through a process of literary analysis.
Credit: ½

153– *Biblical Literature* (Phases 4,5)
154 The Bible is not only the source of some of the greatest literary forms in our culture, from the epic to the symbolic prophecy, but it is also one of the richest sources of allusions in the literature commonly read. The course will attempt to show how Bible literary forms have influenced most American and British writing and to help students see the progression of literature from earlier forms. Bible-related literature will be studied as well as the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible.
Credit: ½

155– *Great Works in Film and Literature*
156 (Phases 4,5)
Great Works is an expedition, a study of man's search for self-discovery in order to find his place in his moral, social, and economic environment. In relation to this theme students will read and critically evaluate some of the significant works that have become a part of our culture. In addition, several modern works will be studied as they reflect the universal themes of great literature. Credit: ½

157 *America in Song* (Phases 1,2,3)
A one semester course concentrating on the concepts basic to the American Heritage as revealed in music and in literature. This class offers a melodious approach to the understanding of American life—past and present. The student who elects this course must be able to sing informally in a group or play a portable instrument. The student will meet these classes in conjunction with his work in the Craft of Communication. Credit: ½

LA MANCHA AND THE HUMANITIES

by

DONN McCAFFERTY
Vermont State Department of Education

I was going to call my speech "The Humanities: A Weed-Covered Curriculum" or "Can Culture Gulch Survive a Car-Wash Culture?" But knowing that you are all associated with the La Mancha Project (and we all know what a superior and vigorous program this is), I thought I would direct my remarks to the traditional English-social studies teacher who is about to be eliminated by your form of aesthetic Darwinism!

You must be fatigued and disenchanted by the endless attacks made upon you, because you are all manufacturing excitement. Indeed, I look at the various La Mancha projects as sort of local Temples of the Dionysian Mysteries. You are all to be congratulated for helping to put Vermont clearly in the foreground of national educational reform. It is because of your work that the *Christian Science Monitor, The New York Times,* and the *Saturday Review* have all taken notice of your efforts in recent months.

Nevertheless, I encountered some difficulty in choosing a La Mancha topic for this presentation. It is always a problem to decide just what to include and what to omit. I feel like a maharajah in India who inherited a harem from his uncle. As he walked through the locked doors into the inner rooms led by a eunuch, he stood silently staring at the scantily clad beauties. He stood there so long that his eunuch asked, "What is wrong, master?" "Oh, nothing," was the answer, "I just don't know where to begin."

I speak to you today a humble man. Now, if you were in a nice, uncomplicated business—say teaching nuclear physics—I would approach this gathering with more confidence. But yours in La Mancha is not a neat, tidy business; and I approach you with trepidation.

You of La Mancha are students of communications skills that are used in a variety of our social structures. You are charged with the responsibility of helping today's kids understand and tell how it was, understand how it is, and how it is to be!

There is always considerable difficulty in reaching agreement over how it was. How it is, changing from day to day or hour to hour, is ever more confusing. How do we explain the social madness gripping our world today? How has this come about? How are our students going to present or find the skills to report this world revolt of the young against the old, poor against rich, black against white, women against men, student against teacher, rural against urban, puritan against libidinous (Denmark has gone from blue cheese to blue movies), fathers against sons, developed against underdeveloped, and orthodoxy against reform? How are our young film makers and aspiring writers going to receive aid from us to tell this their story?

We are living in a time when men have had to re-examine their most precious beliefs, and whole societies have been imperiled by the questioning. Incidentally, this is the first time in world history that we have state-subsidized-revolutions—revolutions on grants from foundations.

If we wonder about student and black rebels, the question is, why don't more of the others rebel? And what a rebellion! A rebellion that expresses itself in total indifference and separation from the society that surrounds it. Many do not even believe in the cult of friendship.

There is a point at which an individual citizen rejects his society. He has at that point several options. One is to leave. The society ought not to hinder his doing so. A second is to agitate for reform. The society ought to protect his right to do so. A third is to drop out. A fourth is to disobey the laws or to revolutionize. In that event, the society ought to imprison, exile, or execute him.

James Baldwin reminds us—

> God gave Noah the Rainbow Sign
> No more Water, the Fire Next Time.

The most conspicuous attribute of the 20th century American is his self-indulgence. In a marvelous book called *The Odyssey of the Self-Centered Self,* Robert Fitch traces the principal concern of civilization through the past 300 years; our concerns were, he says, first predominantly religious, then scientific, then humanistic, and today essentially egocentric.

The old taboos are dead or dying and a new, more permissive society is taking shape whose outlines are etched most prominently in the blunt, often obscene language seemingly endemic in American novels and plays, in the candid lyrics of pop songs, and in the avant-garde ballet, in erotic art and television talk shows, in freer fashions, franker advertising, and the acting out of sexual fantasies of a very aggressive kind. (Shouldn't we admit there are no innocent children; they are just unpracticed?)

All this is done in the name of the "New Freedom." How original is the esthetic theory behind what one young poet called "the breakthrough toward total honesty, total freedom"? How total can honesty be, without risk of doing what Henrik Ibsen's Peer Gynt did, which was to hurt and crush everybody around him by telling all the truth all the time? How unlimited can the commitment to freedom be, without committing society itself to anarchy? These are only a few of the questions that I believe students of the humanities ought to be asking themselves today.

I also believe it to be the function of the humanities and the La Mancha Project not only to analyze and report contemporary trends, but also to relate them to the experience of Western and non-Western traditions. By "tradition" I do not mean a set of rules or doctrines laid down at any given time. I mean, rather, the whole accumulation of ideas, values, and creative genius and talent that has produced the rich body of world art—an ungainly body but a body nonetheless. It has entertained the most varied and conflicting impulses, and only a small portion of what happens at any one time is new and has not happened sometime earlier.

The State Department of Education is deeply and increasingly concerned that more emphasis be placed by the schools of Vermont on those aspects of learning and of human experience that promote a sense of community and that give life ultimate meaning and delight. We believe that a special opportunity exists in the humanities and the arts to provide the leadership needed for a true educational renaissance in our school system. We believe especially that literature, drama, music, the dance, and the visual arts can help young people to relate to one another, and to the universe, with a new sense of excitement, concern, and reverence.

We believe that the curriculum can and must be examined with an eye toward turning students "on"—enabling them to seek realistic solutions to war, hunger, race, poverty, and environment, in their search for a better order.

What changes in our classroom instruction will improve the student's ability? What can grammar teachers of both modern foreign languages and English grammar do to achieve better results? Too often these teachers have been hiding behind requirements for graduation or college entrance. We should never justify what we teach merely by saying that someone at the university requires it. A good deal of the poor teaching that I have observed in New Jersey and Vermont is attributable to unrealistic goals which the language arts teachers say are required by the colleges.

We would like to see La Mancha build on this basic position: that the focus of study is man, his survival and growth as a human individual.

The ultimate goal should be the discovery of (1) a life worth living, and (2) ways to form a society which will make that life possible. We would like to see La Mancha build its studies, in an interdisciplinary way, around important concepts such as freedom, brotherhood, courage, justice, and such factors of protest as alienation.

Do you believe we can change the hygienic conservatism of our schools? It is a complicated attainment, to be sure.

Teachers must keep up on research. We must be aware of good research that indicates possible pedagogical improvements. Let me illustrate by citing the research of Dr. James J. Asher into the development of listening-comprehension skill in language-arts teaching.[1] Perhaps a quotation by fighting Sam Hayakawa, the semanticist and highly publicized pepper-pot president of San Francisco State College, would be of use: "Your end of the educational boat is sinking." The good doctor was addressing a conference of language arts teachers and was telling the teachers that they should be conversant with the work of people like Robert F. Mager *(Preparing Instructional Objectives)* and W. James Popham *(The Teacher-Empiricist)*. Both these men advocate teaching toward measurable goals. What students learn should be measured in precise terms. A greater emphasis upon the ability to use language and less emphasis upon covering a great body of material is the kind of change I hope to see in the future. I would like to say that I do consider myself a snob—I do believe in standards, diversity, sophistication, and superiority.

The young, living in their own dizzy rococo life style (that for my part has reached the height of actual bad taste) are no longer content to sit and be taught, to accept gratefully the opinions, attitudes, and values of the teacher. They want involvement, and they will give their energies to those pursuits that provide it. But rather than allow them an active, inquiring role in the classroom, we have kept them in a state of passive dependency. Traditionally, it is the teacher who talks and plans and holds the stage while the students take notes, read textbooks, and wait for the bell that will release them once more into the real world, the teenage world. A world of light, sound, color, form, and motion.

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[1] Dr. Asher's research comes from the following articles: a. *IRAL*, Vol. III/4, 1965; b. *MLJ*, Vol. L, No. 2, February, 1966; c. *MLJ*, Vol. LIII, No. 1, January, 1969; d. *Parade*, September 21, 1969.

Someone has remarked that the best teachers are often forgotten by their students. When I first read this as a young teacher, I resented and denied its truth. We all, in the beginning at least, want to believe that we will be loved and remembered, that our students as they grow older will look back on our classes as significant experiences. This is the conception of the good teacher we have learned from a host of movies and novels like *Good Morning, Miss Dove* and *The Corn Is Green* (with Bette Davis discovering genius in the coal mines). To say nothing of *Goodbye, Mr. Chips.*

However, setting out to be loved and remembered is setting out to compile a fund of moral obligations. And everyone resents a position of moral indebtedness, however much deserved. It is true, therefore, that the best teachers are often forgotten because they are the ones who make the student find his own way so that in the end he believes he did it all by himself. Few teachers have learned to do this, and even fewer want to, since people do not ordinarily go into teaching to be self-effacing but to find a theater for the performance of their own personal drama. It is the eccentrics who are remembered. (I wonder how Michelangelo would have sculptured and painted today?)

Too often, schoolwork does not require creativity and originality, merely attention and obedience. And because the students feel no personal commitment to the learning, no personal involvement, they can hardly have a sense of responsibility to it, or to us. So we find the schools actually encouraging attitudes of irresponsibility.

The leaders of the adolescent sub-culture in the typical high school are not oriented to the values represented by the teachers, but to their own hedonistic social values. As James Coleman has shown in *The Adolescent Society,* the smart kids figure out the system real quick and they know that the status rewards come not from scholarship but from performance in the athletic and social arenas.

If, then, young people show a strong distaste for learning and are openly hostile to reason, we have the schools to blame as well as the mass media to which they turn so readily. We need to make classrooms into places where students take responsibility for their own learning, where creativity is prized over conformity, and self-reliance over obedience. This means the end of exercises prescribed for all and a switch to situations in favor of individual and small-group activities. It means the end of teachers sitting in judgment, the end of constant teacher grade-giving, and the replacement with student self-evaluation. It is degrading for students to be always at the mercy of someone else's subjective judgment. (This is what the Vermont Design is all about.)

The adolescent world is so interesting, so colorful, so constantly productive of new novelties that the temptation must be very great to settle for a life of diversion.

Certainly the schools today offer little more than the promise that if you stick with it maybe someday you might get some benefit from all that staggeringly complicated curriculum, and that curriculum becomes a sort of tutti-frutti to be smeared over our daily bread.

The mass media teach a life of hedonism and the right of everyone to gratify his desire for sensation. It creates its own audience for the endless hokum it spews forth, stultifying the young and feeding their insatiable appetite for fantasy. Postponement of gratification is a demand increasingly hard to accept. This failure of the schools to engage the minds of students, coupled with the just-mentioned factors, has led to a generation hostile to reason, contemptuous of intellect. Nowadays, young people substitute sensation for art, opinion for judgment.

The effect of years spent watching television, with its endless interruptions for commercials, and seeing movies that are little more than one assault on the senses after another, is to destroy in the young their narrative sense, their sense for the logical flow and development of ideas.

Young people can hardly follow the plot of a TV show anymore, so engrossed are they with the action. And the school, a counter-balance, offers no exercise for the intellect but only for the memory. In consequence the young have hardly any ideas at all, and no interest in ideas, and no ability to talk about the few they have. We might better call them the Inarticulate Generation.

Our task, in La Mancha, is to prevent the surrender of intellect to organized fantasy.

We have allowed the young to become socially independent but not intellectually independent. Our task is to release them from their state of passive dependency on the teacher in order to engage their minds with the life around them, not to destroy their pleasure in it but to increase that pleasure through understanding. Otherwise, we give them up to a life of fantasy with quite predictable results. We have already gone a long way in just that direction, with consequences that can be summed up in two lines by W. B. Yeats:

> We have fed the heart on fantasies,
> The heart's grown brutal from the fare.

The English and social studies teacher is the chief custodian and communicator of metaphors. They can be drawn from any source—friends, Socrates, the Supremes, Bob Bannon, or the Star-Spangled Banner. Formal education today devotes enormous energy to preserving and organizing the best metaphors to impart to pupils in a powerful accumulation of mesmerizing detail. In particular, the English curriculum is organized (over the last four school years) to include Appreciation of Literature, followed by World, American, and English Literature (often in this order). This breakdown permits the teacher to survey the great works, classics, during the appropriate year. Knowing what packages contain the great insights and experiences, the well-intentioned English teacher is prepared to share his "high culture" treasures with his students. But the adolescent entering high school has a disorganized data-rich background of his own, absorbed from TV, radio, and other forms of mass communication. This dichotomy of culture leads to supreme arrogance, supreme innocence, and supreme pointlessness on both sides.

The electronic revolution is not responsible for this dislocation; it has intensified what has long been a problem. Very often teachers have widened the communication gap by dismissing the mass media and supporting their own biases by forcing preconceived cultural judgments upon students. This reinforces the "conning" game which has taken place for decades in our classrooms. The teacher transmits the high culture judgments and students repeat the appropriate stock responses. There are two readily observable trends that are the outgrowth of this fruitless dialogue. First, students remain totally unprepared to evaluate the literature they do "read"—TV shows, films, popular fiction; and secondly, many have turned to study guides as expedient devices permitting them to satisfy the teacher's questions "about" the book without suffering through the reading. The study guide reflects a perfect marriage; it binds the student "who's had it" with the teacher "who's not with it."

John W. Gardner has written, "We can make great progress in improving the functioning of our society and still not have anything that will live or last unless we concern ourselves with the *values* that underlie the enterprise." If a society believes in nothing, if it does not generate in its members a sense of moral purpose, there is no possibility that it can develop the high level of motivation essential to renewal.

We believe that the time has come to strengthen support of the humanities and arts in Vermont education. We call upon the Governor, members of the Legislature, schools of the La Mancha Project, and the people of Vermont to join in this commitment.

We should work quietly, as a sort of cultural C.I.A. working in benign subversion to infect the body politic with the ancient germs of the humanities.

MORE WINDMILLS

by

FRANK MANCHEL

University of Vermont

The teachers of La Mancha are involved in a five-year experiment concerned with the teaching of writing at a time when it is far more fashionable to negate the values of the written word. Many popular and vocal educational reformers predict that writing will soon vanish from our classrooms much the same as it has become obsolete in our society. But more important than the myopic views of pretentious charlatans is our awareness that the teaching of writing is facing a serious challenge in American schools. Even if we find comfort in fantasizing that the present chaos in our profession will pass, we dare not ignore the urgency of re-evaluating the significance of writing in the lives of educated men.

For the past three years, we have witnessed time and time again how courses, methods and materials have remained in the schools in spite of their ineffectiveness. The approach that stresses writing as a handmaiden to literature comes quickly to mind, as do the deadly vocabulary drills in the lifeless workbooks.

Learning to write, I would argue, is extremely important for this and future generations. But if it is to be taught effectively, the arrogance and ignorance of those who teach writing must be removed. In place of our regimented and anachronistic institutions, we must substitute lively and creative centers of learning. We can no longer justify teaching what we want on the grounds that this is the way it has always been done. What we teach must be based upon examined experience, updated scholarship and the needs of society, and not upon convenience and complacency.

The teachers in La Mancha are committed to these ends, but we have not yet found any acceptable answers. And it is for this reason that we have met once more to confront our problems and to accept the challenges they present.

To some we constitute a paradox. Knowing what we do about the tradition-bound curricula in the schools, the present trend to reduce educational budgets, and the growing hostility from superstitious communities, it is puzzling why we continue at all.

Surely, the prosaic world in which we live does not value us much. Many here today sense that we are Job's children; our problems, a catalogue of horrendous crises. And it is not just our problems in the schools. It is our roles as human beings, for we are members of humanity and all around us man appears to be on the path to destruction. The current madness in Vietnam, incredible, terrifying and tragic as it is, is only one manifestation of what can happen when hatred, ignorance, and gluttony arm themselves. Mankind thirsts and hungers in Asia; and the lust, jealousy and injustice of unprincipled men flame new troubles in Africa and the Americas. In the Middle East, millions of men, women, and children wander homeless and helpless while superpowers flirt with genocide. Within the borders of our nation, the long overdue consequences of evasion, indifference, and racism are moving us toward civil war. Giant cities are decaying. Children living in the most affluent society man has yet created are dying of malnutrition. The air we breath, the water we drink, is being polluted. Just this past week we participated in Earth Day to make us stop and see what we have become. All around, the world is in turmoil. Nothing and no one has been spared the anger of our age.

Is it any wonder then that people stare at those of us in La Mancha and ask why we are involved at all, let alone with writing? But for me the answer is obvious. We see the world and the schools as they are, and we have the conviction that they must change, and that learning to write will help to bring about a more meaningful change. We have a deep-rooted faith that ignorance will not bring about reform, nor will blinding men to the importance of their past enable them to see more clearly their future. And so we rise above the paradox of failure and frustration and turn our thoughts to tomorrow.

In looking to the future, it is not my intention to praise or rebuke individual schools for their work this year. That would be too easy. Rather, I want first to remind you what can be done by dedicated and conscientious educators. I want to remind you that being sponsored by the Simmonds Foundation testifies that the business world does not consider writing an obsolete skill. I also want to remind you that the individuals here today from many walks of life testify that to them the teaching of writing is significant. And if the classrooms I visit and the reports I read are meaningful, the three experimental programs you have developed thus far are a commendable step forward in upgrading the quality of education in this country. The trouble, however, is in thinking that we have made major advances in achieving our goals, and that we can now turn our attention to other areas. Indeed, the great danger facing the La Mancha Project is the presence of a method and philosophy which may inhibit further investigation. We must not allow this to happen. I urge you to view our efforts as modest and evolving, not as complete and successful. To do otherwise is to commit intellectual suicide. We need also to look back on what we've done.

What we can sense from our experiences in the past decade is that the Sixties placed too great an emphasis on "a sequential and cumulative curriculum," and not enough on the crucial relationship between the student and the experience. Like Louise Rosenblatt[1]—to whose work this paper is, in part, indebted—I find that far too many curriculum-makers have uncritically applied scientific and mathematical formulas to humanities programs. This has resulted in a series of behavorial curricula which in theory advocates the values of writing in helping students to think and grow, but in practice shifts the emphasis in the classroom. Writing is to show mechanical proficiency. Writing is to explicate literature. Writing is to demonstrate the student's knowledge of what he has learned. And while many teachers verbally reject the unnatural preoccupation with style separated from content, the classroom behavior focuses on correctness, exposition, and analysis.

The objective of this formalized program, the structured teacher usually explains, is to help students express themselves better. The procedure is to begin with a study of sentences which by the end of the semester culminates in long and sometimes heavily documented research papers. Weeks, months, and years go into ordering the experiences and emotions of young people according to a four-year sequential curriculum. The assumption is that one learns to write in stages and that those stages can be prescribed and programed by age and grade levels.

The student enters into the writing program as an individual whose achievement is measured by the faculty's concern with progress, accuracy, and assimilation. But what about the student's concerns? He is required to follow the steps, the program outlines. He is told what to write and when to write. But what about the student's expectations?

This is an important consideration in the teaching of writing currently. We realize, on the one hand, that learning to write helps us to understand not only how and what we feel but also the issues themselves. But, on the other hand, experience has shown that many sequential and formalized writing programs discourage honest and intensive expression. In many classrooms, conservative and timid teachers encourage students to disguise their opinions, deny their beliefs, and repress their emotions. The students follow their natural desire to survive, and write just to fulfill a requirement.

The practice is to encourage self-discipline in place of self-expression. In each case it is easy to blame over-worked and underpaid teachers for their dishonest and cowardly approach to learning. But reactionary school boards, indifferent administrators, and misguided parents have all had their share in creating a situation where dishonesty and sterility are praised. It is pathetic, however, when teachers who live from day to day with frustrated and disenchanted students find order and propriety to be justifiable excuses for emotional slavery. Many educators fear reading their students' true feelings because the young may challenge their values and their institutions.

The teachers claim that the freedom to say whatever you want encourages poor and ineffective writing. What is needed, they argue, is discipline. The student must learn to control his extreme subjectivity and adolescent thinking.

I have no doubts that encouraging students to write what they want, in the manner they best understand, will lead some to immature and disturbing emotionalism. But do we seriously believe that the better method is to discourage or avoid the student's honest expression? It is my feeling that the involved student, the one who writes because he wants to, will become a stronger person as a result of his work, that his desire to express himself honestly will in some way help him to re-examine himself. And to me that's a critical objective in our work. In this respect I am reminded of Langston Hughes' comments in *I Wander and I Wander:*

> For ten years I have been a writer of sorts, but a writer who wrote mostly because when I felt bad, writing kept me from feeling worse; it put my inner emotions into exterior form, and gave me an outlet for words that never came in conversation.

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[1] For a fuller discussion of this theme, and its relationship to literature, see L. M. Rosenblatt, "Pattern and Process—A Polemic," *English Journal*, LVIII, 7 (October 1969), 1005-1012.

Hughes was describing how writing helped one man in a hostile world to survive and to succeed. In many respects, the young share his problems with authority, respect, and identity. They too need not only an outlet for their emotions but also someone who will take the time to listen to their age. And it is this aspect of emotionalism which is absent in so much of the writing that takes place in our classrooms.

In order to move away from this over-emphasis on correctness, exposition, and analysis, we will need to uproot ourselves from a heavy-handed subject matter curriculum and from the tired dissidents who muddle our efforts, who retard progress and experimentation. Our efforts next year will be toward shifting students' activities to thinking and performing rather than knowing. Our meetings and pilot programs next year will stress imagination, feeling, commitment, and humanism.

To a large degree we have already laid the foundations for such an approach in many of the activities this year. Our emphasis on student experiences with importing professional players from New York to Burlington and Rutland, participating in the Stowe Film Workshop, publishing a state newspaper and a literary magazine, sponsoring a film festival, developing ties with the State Department's Lincoln Center Program, the Shelburne Museum's teacher conference, and the Experiment in International Living are just a few of the approaches we are trying.

Furthermore, the Simmonds Foundation, earnestly and actively involved with our efforts, is sending me in May to England, Ireland, and Scotland to develop exchange programs between our schools. For the past several years we in America have heard of exciting work done overseas to shift the emphasis away from the study of literature to the study of the creative response. I hope that my visit will provide suggestions and materials useful for involving our students more and more with creative and emotional experiences.

No doubt this emphasis on the student and his experiences provokes hostility and scorn from several quarters. Some among us consider it opportunism, jumping on the bandwagon that already overindulges adolescents by encouraging them to express their primitive emotions crudely and coarsely. Others view our efforts as the work of Philistines, determined to undermine the values and standards of our society. And still others scoff and call us mad, warning their colleagues about our foolish and impractical dreams. Whatever the excuse to avoid the direct confrontation between us and those we profess to teach, the excuses usually lead to an emphasis on correctness, exposition, and analysis as the major concerns in the teaching of writing.

Behind this refusal to emphasize the emotional experience in writing is the belief that the young don't know enough. Their experiences are limited, their skills are undeveloped, and they aren't self-motivated. Certainly there is some truth to these charges, but they do not by themselves justify a writing program that is literature-centered instead of student-oriented. Theoretically, writing is communication, and it is concerned with an author expressing himself to his audience. What *the student* wants to say, how *he* wants to express it, and the effect *he* wants to achieve provide the learning experience that is vital to writing. The teacher acts as a guide, a critic, and an audience. But he is not the writer, and he should not be dictating the theme. As the adolescent gropes for his ideas, selects his words, and composes his thoughts, he is learning how to write. The time to teach him mechanics, organization, and sentence variety is when he has demonstrated his need to know these skills and you can prove it in the context of his own work.

I want to make it clear that this emphasis on the creative act more than on critical judgment does not mean the abandonment of literature. It does mean, however, that we need to stress appropriate writers more than national authors. It does not mean that students read less. It does mean that we move to larger and better in-class libraries for more-extensive reading programs. It does not mean that we abandon our concern with standards. But it does mean that our standards are more closely tied to values than to subject matter.

Those of us who have been chasing windmills for so long have realized what all educators should know: if we want to change the schools, help our students grow and be what they can be, we need to relate to the people we teach, understand the things they feel. We must help them to help us find the way to reduce human suffering and increase human happiness.

There are many around us who predict that we will be rudely awakened from our impossible dreams. But they are wrong because they have not understood that we measure our success not by what is achieved but by what is attempted. We know that we face the unbeatable foe, that we go where the brave dare not go, and that we try to right the unrightable wrong.

Most of all, we know that ours is an impossible dream. But we wouldn't have it any other way.

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

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